

To the reader.

**T**his sermon of the gr.  
of the mercyes of god, made by  
moste famous doctour maister Era-  
mus Rotterodamus, was translated  
out of latine into englyshe, in the whi-  
che sermon the great mercy of our lord  
god is so fruitefully and so lyuely set  
out before our eies, that I thinke  
veraiely, no man can reade it,  
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The p̄face.

**C**To the reader Gen-  
tian Heruet gretynge.



**I**haue transla-  
ted out of latine in to  
englishe, this sermon  
that Erasmus made  
of the mercy of god:  
the which I thought  
shuld be a good dede,  
if it were printed and sp̄ede abroad:  
And where as afore learned men one-  
ly did get out both pleasure and great  
fruite in readynge of this boke, now  
euery man, as well rude as learned,  
maye haue this sermon of the mer-  
cy of god as common vnto him, as the  
mercy of god in selfe is. And as tou-  
ching the commendacion either of the  
authour or of the worke, I knowe the  
tendres of my wit muche more slen-  
dre, than that I can bee able to beare  
the weyght of suche an enterpryse, and  
I reken to be muche better to hold my  
tonge bitetly from the praisynge, than  
of them to speake to litell, and for  
faulte of wytt to minishe theyr excels

All

lence

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lence. Yet nerthelesse it semeth exped-  
ient vnto me, that by this meane bri-  
efely other folke maye knowe howe  
noble the authoꝛ of this worke is, and  
how much we be bounde to him for it.  
The authoꝛ of the booke is Erasmus  
Rotterdamus, whom my praises can  
no more ennoble, than the son with a  
candle maie bee made cleare. He is  
the man, to whome in leaꝛnyng no ly-  
uyng man maie hym selfe compare:  
and not onely passeth them that be a-  
lyue, but also from the moſte parte of  
olde authoꝛs hath beaſte the price,  
and not only painems and gentils but  
also Chriſten doctors. He is the man,  
that when in his fyſte daies trouthe  
was far hyd in the depe veines of the  
grounde, and more ouer it was prohi-  
bited as a thyng beyng worthy death,  
that no man ſhulde for his enquire, he  
dyd not ſuffre the worlde to bee con-  
founded with ſuch a merueilous dark-  
nes: and either he hath dygged vp ma-  
ny lymmes of trouthe, or at the leaſte  
reſtored vs free libertee to ſerche for  
hit. He is the man, that to Iſaac maie  
be compared, the whiche dygged vp  
the goodly ſpringyng welles, that the  
p̄his



Philistins destroyed, and with dytke  
and donge ouerfilled. The cleere springes  
of the holy scripture, that the Philistins  
had so troubled, so marred, and  
so defiled, that no man coude drynke  
or haue the true tast of the water, thet  
be nowe by his labour and diligence  
to their olde purenesse and cleannesse so  
restored, that no spotte nor earthly filth  
in theim remaineth. And though the  
Philistins dyd all that thet coude to  
disturbe him frome his holy purpose,  
and that among the people by the rea-  
son of theim, he was greatly hated  
and enuied, yet at last, as it chaun-  
ceth alwaie vnto theim, that with a  
boldestomacke in their good dedes do  
continue, excellent vertue hath ouer-  
come enuye, whan frome this man  
there can come out nothyng but bothe  
it is excedyng profitable, and on eue-  
ry syde all perfecte, me thinketh that  
this lyttell treatise, beyng in euerye  
poynte as perfecte as any other be in  
profite, not onely geueth no place but  
also greatly passeth: for where afore  
the workes that he made were profi-  
table but specially to one kinde of mē,  
his pꛛouerbes, his New Testament,

### The pzeface.

and many other treatises onely to learned men, of the boke of the Instruction of princes the moſte profit redoundeth to princes. This boke onelye, with the boke called the knife or weapon of a Chriſten ſouldiour, hath ſo far ſpcede abroad his fruitfull branches, that there is no man, but great fruit gether he maie out of it, except he that thynketh it maketh no matter whether he be dampned or ſaued. And as for the knife of a Chriſten ſouldiour, whiche he nameth Enchiridion, it bryngeth a man out of the waie of vices, and leadeth him in the waie of vertue, and the pathe of ſaluacion.

This littell treatyſe of the mercye of god teacheth a mā to aſcribe nothyng to hym ſelfe, but all to gether to the mercye of god, ſeyng that the fre will it ſelfe, that we bee indued with all, is the fre gyfte of almyghty god, and excepte it were by hym made cleare, it ſhoulde be ſo darke with the ruſte of the originall ſynne, that the image of vertue in it ſhoulde neuer be faſt prynced. And who ſo euer beyng entred in to the kyngdome of god by baptyme, dothe aſcribe any thyng to his owne wyſe



Wysedome, to his merites, and to his  
deseruynges, and not acknowledgynge  
uery where his owne feeblenes, trust-  
yng vpon the free grace and mercy of  
almighty god, it is to be dradde, lesse  
for mercy, (euer where redy for him  
that calleth) he proue the sore and ry-  
gorous iustice of god. Nowe lette vs  
see, whether it be more expedient for a  
mans saluacion, either by iustice to be  
feared frome synne, or by mercy to be  
enticed bothe to loue and to vertue.  
Iustice with hir sore thretninges com-  
pelleth a man to flee vyce, and engen-  
dꝛeth in hym a certaine bondly feare,  
that it is an odious thynge vnto him to  
commit synne, not for the hate it selfe  
of syn, but for feare of punishment:  
Mercye contrarie, putteth before a  
mannes face the vnspeakable loue of  
god towarde him, the which so loued  
hym, that he dyd not spare his onely  
sonne for his sake, the incredib'le bene-  
fites, the infinite desyre of his salua-  
cion, the continuall callynge vpon him  
to bringe him to the euerlasting blisse.  
On the other syde, he sheweth him as  
it were in a glasse, the weakenes and  
feblenes of a man, the perils that he

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Is compassed about with, the calamities, the miserie, the wretchednes that on euery syde he is wrapped in, and that in so many mischeues, there cometh no succour but fro the mercye of god: do not all these engendre in hym a certaine chyldyshe loue towarde his father, that he will performe his commaundementes, not for feare of punishment, nor for loue of rewarde, but because it pleaseth his mooste louyng father? And that he accompted this a veraie great rewarde to do the thing that dothe lyke suche a good father. And where it is saied, The feare of the lorde is the begynnyng of wysedome, though the same feare somwhat concerneth the dreade of iustice, yet I resken it is not to be taken for that bondly feare that maketh vs to dreade the sore punishmentes, but for that, that maketh vs to loke about, that we doe nothyng, that shoulde displease our most louyng father. Or els feare, without loue, longeth to a cruel tyran, that careth not for the peoples hatred, so they feare hym: and not to the mooste mercyfull lorde and father of vs all, whose loue towarde mankynde neyther



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ther with mynde can bee comprehended, nor with woordes any thyng expressed. The whiche seying he loueth vs so muche, and that all our helpe and succour cometh from hym, let vs sette all our truste and confidence in hym, withdrawyng all our truste and hope frome all worldly thynges, and frome all mortall men. If we bee in nede, lette vs call vpon hym, he is liberal!, he geueth gladlyer than other dooe take, if we make hym not a nygarde in askyng of small thynges and vnworthy of hym to be geuen. If we be in sinne, lette vs call vpon his mercy, beyng sorry and repentant. Whan so euer a synner is truely repentant, he forgeueth all maner of synne. Here amonge men, they that dooe forgeue syn, haue not all an egall power: but god hym self is he that hath rule both in heauen and in earthe, there is no doubt that of his auctoritee and power can be made. If we desyre to come to the euerlastyng felicitye, and eschewe the fearfull peynes of hell, let vs beseeche his mercy to kepe vs from synne, and geue vs strength to fulfyll his will and commaundementes, and

Av

that

### The p̄face.

that done, lette vs put vs all holle to  
his pleasure and mercy, and lette vs  
not trust vpon certaine vayne prayers,  
whiche with muche errour bee spreade  
amonge men, as though thei had this  
vertue and power, that who so euer  
mumbleth theim vp, shall eschewe e-  
uerlastyng punishment. O subtile  
serpent, O disceitfull diuel, howe va-  
rious, howe craftie be thine imagina-  
tions? because he seeth, that from our  
simple and stedfast beleue he can not  
brynge vs awaie, he goeth aboute to  
brynge vs into an odious superstiti-  
ousnes, and because he seeth that that  
man can not do amisse, that vpon the  
mercy of god setteth his holle trust, he  
persuaderh rude and ignorant fooles  
to set their truste vpon vayne thinges,  
that they shoulde set onely vpon god.  
Surely suche he is, and he will neuer  
ceasse to leat vs from our iourney he-  
uenwarde, out of which place he was  
caste downe. But the mo wyles and  
subtiltees that he worketh, the more  
grace and strengthe god geueth vs to  
withstande him. But it is time to lay  
by, my rude and vneloquent langage,  
that ye may here Erasmus speake elo-  
quent.



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quently, and in your owne mothers  
tounge veraie plainely, the whiche so  
commendeth to the herers the vnmea-  
surable and infinite mercye of god,  
that who so euer in his herte fast prin-  
teth it, he shal finde out of it a maruei-  
lous great fruite bothe to knowe his  
owne misery, and of god the infi-  
nite bountee, the whiche two  
thynges be most effectual to  
directe vs to the euerla-  
sting felicitye, that  
is Christe Iesus,  
the which pre-  
serue vs. A-  
men.

**This endeth the  
p̄face.**

**A**

De misericordia.

**A** sermon of the great-  
nes of the mercies of god, made  
by Erasmus Rotterodamus.

Proposi-  
cion.



**I**n the purpose  
this day to speake of  
the excedyng great-  
nes of the mercies of  
the lord, Bretherne  
and sisterne welbelo-  
ued in Christe, with-  
out whose helpe mannes frailtee and  
weakenes can naught do: let vs all to-  
gither with a common prayer beseeche  
the mercie of the lord of vs all, so to  
moue my tounge, and so to stire and  
kendle your hertes, that as we shall  
departe hence throughe the mercy of  
the lord more plentifully endued  
with heauenly grace: so euery man to  
his neyghbourward maie more abun-  
dantly vse the workes of mercy.  
Some vse here to greete the virgine  
mother, to whome I denie not, euery  
where muche honour oughte to be ge-  
uen, but veraiely to our purpose now,  
me semeth more expedient, if ye follow  
me thus goyng before you.

Jesus




**I**hesus Christe, the almyghtie worde of the euerlastyng father, that promysed to be present, whete so euer two or thre were asseble in thy name: Lo how many in thy name be hete gethered.

Wouchesafe therfore, according to thy promise, to be amonge this company: that their hertes beyng lyghted thorough grace of the holy gooste, maie vnderstande more fully the greatnesse of thy mercy, wherby we all together maie with a lusty mynde both yelde to the thanks for thy mercye, that hath been to vs so often shewed, and that we maie more desirously in all our necessities, call thereon for helpe: and lastely that we beyng humble seruantes, maie to our power louyngly prosecute on our felowes, lyke wyse seruantes, the mercy of our lord, that in vs we haue largely proued. Amen.

**I**f euery man (as the Rhetoriciens teache) is right diligent and attentue to here those thynges, that he perceyue shuld sharply touche him: there oughte none of you to nodde or sleepe in this sermon tyme, seeyng the saluation of vs all legally dependeth on the mercy of the lord. No: there is none  
to

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so younge nor so olde, of so lowe or so hyghe byrthe, so poore nor so riche, so bonde, nor so free, so cunnyng nor so vylearned, so wicked nor so iuste: but that he hath often times both proued the mercy of the lord, yea and nedeth the mercy of the lord to all thynges that he rightously goth about. What matter more fauourable may be treated of, than that by the mercy of god, euerlastyng health is prepared for all men? Of veraic ryght therfore in this sermon tyme, all ye that bee here present, shoulde not onely take good heede, but also bee iustie and glad to here it: for who so euer dothe loue and fauour him selfe, must nedes loue and fauour this sermon.



**A**monge the manyfolde yuels, that drawe mankynde to euerlastyng damnacion, two bee chiefe and principall mischeues: Of whiche they oughte specialllye to be ware, that loue vertue and goodnesse, and that desire to come to the felowshyp of euerlasting felicitye: The two be these, To muche trust on ones owne selfe, and Despayre. The one cometh of a presumptuous mynd against god, that

Confidēce  
Despayre.



that the loue of ones selfe hath blynded: The other is engendred one way by pondryng of the greatnesse of offences, an other waie by consydering of the sharpe iudgement of god, without remembrance of his metcy. Either of these is so pestilent and cursed, that many men doubt, whiche of theim is more to be abhorred. for what is greater madnes or more to be wayled, thā man, that is but earth and ashes, (yea and what so euer he is or maie dooe, is for it all bounde to the goodnesse of god) to rebell against hym, of whome he was created, of whom he was redeemed, and of whom by so many meanes he is called to the company of euerlastyng lyfe? Is it not a poynte of betray great unkindnesse to set naught by hym, of whom thou haste receiued so many benefites? but what a great madnesse is it, ones to will, to rebell againste hym, that maie destroye the with a becke? what a great wyckednesse is it, not to knowlage thy maker, not to honour thy father, not to loue thy Sauour? Unhappie Lucifer was the fyrste, that boldly this durst dooe, Whiche ascriuing to hym selfe,  
that

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Isa. 14.

2. Pet. ii.

that he had frely receyued of almyghtie god, saied in his herte: I wyll get vp aboue in heauen, I wyll exalte my seat aboue the sterres of god, I wil sit vpon the hylle of testimonie in the sydes of the northe wynde, I will clime vp aboue the height of the cloudes, I wyll be lyke to almyghtie god. But woulde to god, that the vnhappie fall of Lucifer myght at the leaste feare mortall creatures from folowynge of his vnglacious example, if the wycked deede it selfe can not feare theim. Merely if god did not spare the proude presumptuous aungels, but dyd caste theim headlyng downe into hell, and ordeyned theim, strictly bounde in cheynes, to be kepte tyll the date of dome: what deserueth man, a feely woorme, which as he were now crept out of the earthe, and muste shortly retourne to earthe againe, is proude, presumptuous, and testie against god? The more lowe and vile the condiction of man is, the more abhominable is his presumption, desirynge to be egall with god.

The auncient poetes feygued, that there rose a styfe on a tyme amonge the



the goddess, whiche constrained Iu-  
piter hym selfe to forsake heauen, and  
to flee into Egypte, and there in an o-  
ther shappe to hyde hym: but a farre  
more wycked dede was it that the gy-  
antes went about, whiche conspiryng  
to gether againste Iupiter, dyd caste  
billes vpon billes, that they myght so  
conquere heauen, and expell Iupiter  
from thence.

**T**yea laughe, and  
maie right well: for these tales that  
ye here be not gospell: but yet the e-  
rudite olde tyme wolde signifie some  
what vnder the coueryng of these fa-  
bles, that longeth to the expreſſyng of  
mortal men's maners.

**S**almoncus was throwen downe  
headlyng into hell, because he coun-  
terfeited the thounder and lightning  
of Iupiter. Admitte it be but a fable:  
but yet howe many scly mortalle men  
haue there bene, that in deede and se-  
ryously wolde haue heauenly honors  
done to them? Dyd not god tourne  
Nabugodonosor (that woulde haue  
made hym selfe a god) into a brute  
beaste, that frome a beast he shoulde  
retourne to a humayne shappe?

**B**reat Alexander woulde be taken

B

for

Dani. iiii.

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for Jupiters soonne, and suffered hym self to be worshipped at his table. Domitius Cesar in all his letters patentes and pistilles, and in his communication wolde be called bothe god and lord. Adrian ordeyned, that Antinous shoulde be worshipped as a god. Why reherse I all this, whan it was a solemne thyng amonge the Romaynes, after their Emperours were departed this life, to make them gods? Some of them alyue had godly honours, whiche honours to accepte whan they were offered, is wycked madnes, and to vsurpe them is desperate blyndnesse.

ii. Cel. ii.

If auctoritee of storyes bee of no great weyght, leat vs heare what the apostell Paule wrote to the Thessalonicens of Nero: surely some dooe interpretate it thus: And the creature of synne, (saith he) were vncouered, the childe of perdition, whiche is against god, and is enbansed aboue all that is called god, and that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of god, shewing hym selfe as though he were god. But peraduenture it shall seme no merueyle, if they, that worshype  
ped



ped for goddis oren, apes, dogges, yea  
and thinges more vile, dumme stoucs,  
and woode, woulde haue theim selves  
taken for goddes, as farre more excel-  
lent thynges that those, to whiche the  
people dyd godly honours.

**I**n the actes of the apostels Herod,  
knowyng there was but one god, of  
whose honour no man coude be par-  
tener, dyd suffer the people to crie to  
hym in his sermon, and saie: This is  
the voyce of god, and not of a man:

Act. xii.

Shortly after he was stryken by the  
aungel of god, the whiche reuenged  
that iniurie. And so be the miserable  
god dyed of the loowly euill, whiche  
is a disease most foule, stynckynge, and  
peruefull.

**I**f I woulde to god there were none a-  
monge christians, that folowed the  
wyckednes of Lucifer, I will not saie  
passe it. What? Loke ye, that I shuld  
open to you somewhat of secrete con-  
fessions? What nede it, whan in some  
countreys in the market place, in the  
churches, at dyner, at supper, in play-  
yng and sportyng, we maie here all a-  
bout howe they forswere theim selfe  
by the moste honourable name of god.

¶ ii

¶ This

### De misericordia

This that I saie, is but a light thing: we heare the name of god denyed, the holy name of Christe, with many vile woordes, blamed: in bytyng the fore synger god is thretned, and the thome being put betwene the forrest and the myddell synger, thei doe that against god, the fountaine of all glorie, that is wonte to bee done against an infamous person, for reproche and shame. Be there none trowe ye amonge Christians (if they maie be called Christians) whiche for ryches, (that they muste shortly forgo) or for foule bodily pleasure, or for transitorie honors, dooe forsake theyr owne prince, and make a wycked composition with theyr foe Satanas: the fourme of the othe conceyued, at ones they forsake what so euer couenaunte they made with Christe, and offre to helle theyr body, as the fyrst frutes, to the prince wherof thei haue vowed wholly their soule: These thynges we see punished daiely by open execution. What thyng lyke dyd Lucifer: for hym the sonne of god dyed not: and yet he was not so hardye to blaspheme god: he alonely desyred egal honour.

That



**T**hat unhappie countrey, wherein Gen. 19  
sometyme were . v . myghtie citees,  
nowe beyng a pestilent and abhomi-  
nable lake (for the sweete waters of  
Jordan bearyng yll favoured clays,  
the horrible example wherof shall re-  
mayne euer in remembraunce to them  
that come after) had the inhabitantes  
therof vtterly geuen to ryot and leche-  
ry, but yet we reade not, that any of  
theim was so wycked, that he woulde  
blaspheme god, or curse and threaten  
hym: and yet they were all destroyed  
with rayne myngled with brimstone.

**O**, what an horrible thyng is this,  
there ben founde among Christen peo-  
ple, that dare dooe that, that Lucifer  
durst not, that Gomorra durste not:  
whiche also to their so many abhomi-  
nable deedes iorgue blasphemie.

**I** see you (moste deare bretherne)  
tremble at the reherling of these thin-  
ges, and no metuayle: For I my selfe  
also reherling them, quyuer and shake  
bothe body and soule. Neuer the lesse  
we purpose not onely in this sermon  
to declare, howe great a syn dispeire  
of forgeueneffe is, but also to shewe  
you, howe excedyng great the mercy

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of god is : whiche to laude and praise  
we haue this daie enterprised : the  
whiche mercy also spærcth suche fol-  
kes, and geueth theim space to repent  
and amende.

Fuel ly-  
uyng open  
ly, is blas-  
phemy.

**E** Paradventure we stande in our  
own conceit, because amonge vs here,  
the examplis of those crimes, that I  
reherſed while ere, bee ſeldome ſeen :  
But what mattier maketh it, if the  
tonge ſoundeth no blaſphemy, whan  
of many the wholle lyfe ſpeaketh no  
other thyng but blaſphemy againſte  
god ? The gluttons for god worſhypp  
they beaſy, the whiche continually,  
by ryght and wronge, gape ſtyll to  
heape vp ryches together, whiche by  
murther, treaſon, poiſonyng, and en-  
chaunting ſtalke vp to honours, whi-  
che by tyraunny oppreſſe the poore peo-  
ple, whiche to haue all thynges after  
theyr will and mynde, kende all the  
worlde to warre : nor they perſeue-  
ryng ſtyll in theſe great euyls, haue  
no ſhame nor repentaunce, but with a  
ſhameles countinaunce, lyke a comon  
woman, reioyſe, yea in thynges moſt  
miſchiſfull, ſcornyng and mockyng  
the good lyuers: Doe not the capty-  
ues



nes by those deedes saie: There is no god, goddes behestis bene false, the threynnges of god be in vayne, the worde of god is a ly, yelding the ioies of heauen to them that mourne here, that thyrst and hunger Justice, that be meke, that suffre persecution, that for iustice sake ben with vyle woordes rebuked: What thing is more abhominable than this blasphemy? And yet if any thyng can be worse than this, whiche is moſte euyl. Despeire is worse than the wholle synkyng multitude of other synnes.

**T**he wycked man, seeyng he might dooe what he woulde, without punishment, was proude of his prosperitee, and saied in his hert: There is no god, and there is no knowlage aboue god careth not for mortall folkes busynesse. And as one is lesse iniurious towarde a man, that beleueth he is not, than that he shoulde beleue hym to be either cruel or false: So like wise they bene lesse wycked, that vnterly saie, there is no god, than they that beleue he is vnmmerciful, taking awaye from hym that vertue, without whiche kynges be not kynges but tyrans.

B iiii

But

Mat. v.

## De misericordia

aine the  
her of  
vera

But who so ever casteth hope of for-  
geuenesse a syde, and rolleth him selfe  
downe into to the hurlepytte of Des-  
perye: he doth not onely beleue, that  
god is not almightie, supposyng some  
synne to bee so horrible, that god can  
not forgeue it: but also he maketh god  
a lyer. For god promiseth by his pro-  
pher, that he will incontinent cleane  
forgette all maner synnes, as soone as  
the synner bewayleth them. Contra-  
rye wyle, they that folowe Cain, saie  
thus: My synne is greater, than that  
I maie deserue forgeuenesse. What  
saiest thou wycked wretche? If god  
being overcome with the greatnesse of  
thy synne, maie not forgeue the, thou  
pluckest from him his power almighty:  
and if he wyl not dooe that that  
he maie do, he is a lyer and false, whiche  
will not persourne that that he  
so many tymes promysed by the moun-  
thes of the prophetes. ¶ It is in-  
finite, what so ever is god. But, in  
speciall thinges be in hym, most highe  
power, moste highe wisdom, and  
moste highe goodnesse. And all be it,  
that power is wonte to be ascribed to  
the father, as his propre: wisdom  
to



to the soonne, and goodnes to the holy gooste : yet there is none of these thynges, but it is egally common to all thre persones .

**T**his high power he shewed, whan he created these merueilous workes of the worlde onely with a becke, of the whiche there is no part, but it is full of miracle, y<sup>e</sup> the veray ppsimers and spiders crye out, and shewe the great power of theyr maker .

Againe, whan he deuided the waues of the red sea : whan he restrained the streame of Iordane, and made the riuer passable for a fote man : whan, whyle Josue fought, he made the son and the moone to stinte theyr course : whan with touchyng he healed lepers : and with a woorde reysed dead men to lyfe, he shewed hym selfe to be lorde of nature .

**A**nd seeyng that he with egall wysedome consueteth and gouerneth those thynges, the whiche by his power (that can not be declared) he hath made : he sheweth hym selfe to be no lesse wyse than almyghtie . And albeitt that his goodnes shyneth every where, as in the wonderfull creacion of aungels, and this worlde, was a poynte of highe good-

## De misericordia

nesse: for whan he to highe felicittee,  
that he hath of hym selfe, lacketh no-  
thyng that myght bee added, yet he  
made mankind properly to the entent,  
that therein he might specially expresse  
the greatnes of his goodnes and mer-  
cy: for in that behalfe, god wolde not  
all onely shewe hym more louyng to  
vs, but also more merueylous. The  
dooe merueyle somtyme at a kynges  
power and myght, whiche either hate  
or enuy him: But gentilnes and lybe-  
raltee is beloued euen of theym that  
haue no neede: For they consydering  
the casualtee and chance of mankind,  
thynke there is no man, but that he  
maie happe to haue neede. But there  
is no man, hath ben, nor shall be, but  
that he hath nede of the mercy of god.  
For as witnesseth the olde testament,  
the sterres be not cleare in the syght of  
god, and in his angels he founde wic-  
kednes. And Paule crieth to the Ro-  
mans: There is none except, all haue  
sinned, and nede the glorie of god, that  
every mouthe maie be stopped, and all  
the worlde be made subiect to god.  
¶ Nowe let vs here, howe well with  
hym agreeth the muscicall singer, whi-  
che

Rom.iii.



the with a lustye spirite exhorte all good folkes, that they shoulde with a spirituall harpe, with a sautry of. r. strynges, with a new songe, and with great shouttyng, celebrate the glozve of God, sayng: the lorde loueth mercie and iudgement, all the earth is full of the lordes mercie.

Psalm. xxxii

¶ Ones onely is made mencion of iudgement, but mercie is twyse reherced, with this commendacion, that thereof all the earth is ful. ¶ And I dare saie this muche more, staing me by the auctoritee of Job, and the apostle: That not onely the erth is full of the lordes mercie, but also heauen and hell?

What saith the .xxxv. psalme: O, lorde, thy mercie is in heauen, and thy trouth reacheth to the cloudes. They in hel perceiued the mercie of the lord, whan he brake the gates of darkenes, and brought out the prisoners into the heauenly kyngdome.

¶ If one woulde considre the workes of god, whiche after the mysticall discussyng of Moyses, he made perfecte in the fyrste. vi. daies, he shuld greatly merueile at his power and ineffable wysdome, yea and crie out in the voice of

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**Glent sunt**  
**cell et ter-**  
**ra. &c.**

**Dan. iii.**

of all the churche: The heauens and  
erth be ful of thy glory. For he coude  
not absteine hym selfe, but braste out  
in the hymne of the three chyl dren:  
Blesse ye all the workes of the lorde,  
praise and leape for ioye in hym euer-  
more. ¶ What so euer is created in  
the heauens, what so euer aboue the  
heauens, what so euer in earth, what  
so euer vnder the earthe, what so euer  
in the ayre: dothe shewe openly with  
voyce continual the glory of the lorde.  
But what saith the psal. 144. The  
lorde is pitieus and mercifull, he is  
patient and muche merciful, the lorde  
is sweete vnto all, and his mercifull  
pities done passe al his workes. Than  
some thyng there is, that is more mer-  
ueylous, than to haue made the hea-  
uens with so manye bryghte sterres,  
than to haue created the erth with so  
many kyndes of beastes, of trees, and  
varietee of all thynges, than to haue  
created so many companies of angels  
call myndes. ¶ Who durste bee so  
bolde to affirme this, excepte the pro-  
phet shewed plainly, that the mer-  
cyes of the lorde dyd passe the glory of  
all his other workes: And yet he shal



nothyng doubt it to be true, who so euer with a religious curiositee, wyl well consyde, howe muche more mercyeously he redremed man, than he created hym. Is it not more wonderfull, god to be made man, than the angels to be created of god? Is it not more merueile, that god, beyng wrapped in a babes clothes, shoulde wayle and crie, in the cratche or racke, than to reigne in the heuens, that he made? Here the angels, as a thyng of greatest wonder, dooe syng gloire to god in the most highe heauenly mansions. They see the moste lowly humilitee, and knowe the moste excellent highnesse. All the counsaile of redeempng mankynde, Chyestes life, Chyestes reachyng, Chyestes miracles, affliction, crucifyng, resurrection, apperyng, ascencion, the sending of the holy goste, the worlde innouate by a fewe sely poore idiote men: This counsaile, I saie, is it not on euery syde full of miracles, yea that the beaie angels can not serche out? Wylked spirites see and vnderstande the reason of the worldes creacion, but the counsaile of the worldes rehozyng was hyd frome them:

Luc. ii.

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Abac. iii.

them: and in this point, craft disceined  
craft, the craft of mercy begiled craft  
of malice. The creacion of the world  
was the worke of puissance, but the  
worlde so restored was the worke of  
mercy. The endes of the crosse (saith  
Abacuc) in his handes, there is his  
strength hyd. ¶ What is more vile  
than the crosse? What is more wea-  
ker than the crucified? yet vnder that  
weakenesse, excedyng power of diuine  
mercie laie hyd, that brake, ouercame,  
and cleane destroyed all the tyrannie  
of the diuel. The same prophet, whi-  
che had eares erudite, and eies verie  
cleare by saith, hearde and saue the  
holle frame of the worlde on euery  
parte shewe the great myght of god,  
and he was afrayde: he consydered  
his workes and was amased. And yet  
as thoughe in all these thynges the  
great myght of god had not been shew-  
ed but skenderly, he added to those  
wordes, that shuld overcome all these  
workes: In the myddes of two beas-  
tes thou shalt bee known. In the  
meare, or in the boundyng of the olde  
and newe testament, he beyng made  
man, dyd open plainly that moste ba-  
reful



Thesfull miracle of his mercie. **Un=** **Abac. iii.**  
 Doubtedly it is that the prophet soone  
 after saith: whan thou wouldest be  
 angry, thou shalt remēbre thy mercy.

**O**f them that doe thinges wonder-  
 full, we be wonte to saie: In them he  
 ouercame all other, in this he ouer-  
 came hym selfe. Of god some thyng  
 lyke maie well bee saied: God is in-  
 comparable in all his deedes, and can  
 not be folowed, but in mercy, he exce-  
 deth hym selfe. Holy scripture ex-  
 tolleth no vertue in god so muche as  
 mercy, which scripture sometyme cal-  
 leth it great, sometime ouermuch, and  
 sometyme augementeth the plentifull  
 abundance therof by noumbre of mul-  
 titude.

**C**hyngge Dauid the prophete in the **Psal. l.**  
 same place, comprehendeth whollye  
 bothe the largenesse and multitude of  
 goddes mercy, saieyng: O god, haue  
 mercye on me after thy great mercye,  
 and after the multitude of thy mer-  
 cies do awaie my wyckednes. Where  
 as is great miserie, there is neede of  
 great mercy. If ye consydre how hor-  
 ryble and greuous the sinne of Dauid  
 was, than ye knowe the greatnesse of  
 mercy

### De misericordia

mercy: If ye caste in your mynde, in howe many maner wise he offended in one trespas, than maye ye see the multitude of goddes mercies. ¶ An exceeding great offence is neuer committed alone, a faute draweth a faute, as one lynke dothe an other in a cheyne. First he ioygned together two moste deadly synnes, man slaughter and aduouty, eche of them was moste greuous in a kyng: whose office is to punyssh the other that so offende. For the more that princes dooe amis unpunished among men, the more they offend God. He bare a sworde to punyssh the manslaughter, and he hym selfe committed manslaughter. By hym women taken in aduouty, were deliuered to be stoned to deathe, and he hym selfe dyd compelle to dooe aduouty. He augmented also the same aduouty veray greatly, in that that he had flockes of wyues and concubines at home, and yet not for neede, but for wantounnes he coueted an other mans wyfe: wherby he seemed to delyte rather in rauishment than in simple fornicacion. For he offendeth not so much, whome neede constreigneth to steale



steale somewhat from the ryche man,  
as he dothe, that hath his house plena-  
tifullie stuffed, and yet taketh his  
gowne from him, that hath no mo but  
one to his backe. ¶ This cruell of-  
fence Nathan the prophet laied to his  
charge, vnder the parable of the riche  
these, and the poore man robbed.

Now there is no kinde of manslaughter  
more cruell, than that that is com-  
mitted, not by chaunce medley, or so-  
deyne mowynge of the mynde, but by a  
dyfte before dyuen, awaityng for a  
conuenient tyme. Arias had deser-  
ued none euill, the kyng knewe hym  
ryght trustie, and he abused the same  
trustynesse of the man to his destructi-  
on. Arias woulde in no wyse entre  
within his own house, to lye with his  
wyfe, because the arke of god was ly-  
yng in the tentes, and Joab the cap-  
taine of the warre, with the people,  
slepte vpon the ground: and all that  
great worthines of the man coude not  
tourne the kynges mynde from the e-  
uill deede. On the morowe after, the  
kyng had hym to supper, and made  
hym dronke, sekynge therby (as one  
maie coniect) occasion to destroy him,

¶

if he

## De misericordia

If he through drunkennes should happe to speake ought vndiscretly. And yet Arias being dronke, wolde in no wise entre into his owne house, to take his pleasure with his wyfe. ¶ Than another gyle was deuised, wherby the stronge and trustie warriour shoulde perishe. A letter of murther to hym (mistrustyng no suche thyng) was deliuered: for the kyng knewe his faithfulnessse so perfecte, that he hadde no doubt, that he woulde open and rede it. In the offence of manslaughter he made Joab the capitaine partaker, lyke as he had done Bersabee of the aduoutrie. And Arias perished not alone, but to couer the gyle with, many were brought into the same daunger: a great noumbre of people was set in the open shot of theyr ennemies, to the ende that one innocent might be kylde, to geue place to the kynges foule bodily pleasure. Therefore howe many sins were included in this one offence? If it had be one onely synne, and that exceeding great, it needed great mercy. But now David, seyng his synne so manyfolde and so dyuerse, calleth on the multitude of mercies. But howe largely



largely the mercy of God is opened, the .35. psalme declarerh, sayng: O good lord, thou shalt save men and beastes, lyke as thou hast multiplied thy mercy. ¶ God saueh not onely men, but also he vouchesafeth, for mens behofe, to saue beastes. ¶ Againe in an other place, howe reioyseth the spirite of the prophet, whan he saierh: I wil syng the mercies of the lord for euermore. And therfore in the heauens the mercy of god is worshypped and honoured, lyke as saierh an other psalme: Knowlage your selfe to god, because he is good, because his mercy is in all worldes. ¶ The praysyng of the mercy of god seemed to haue an ende, after that the ende of all wretchednes came: except that the same felicitie, that blessed soules haue in heauen, were the geste of mercy: and the punishment of the wycked synners were tempered with the great mercy of god. ¶ But what shall we saie, whan all the lyfe, (with a thousande synnes, and all the stinkyng sea of vyces) is corrupted? Meraiely we must crie out with Asaph: O lord, remembre not our olde iniquitees, but let thy

Psal. cxviii

## De misericordia

**Psal.**  
**lxxviii.**

**II. Reg.**  
**xxiii.**

mercies preuent vs quickly : for we  
be made ouer pooze. Againe in an no-  
ther place : Manye bee thy mercyes,  
lorde, after thy pleasant speache quic-  
ken me. Againe in an other place Da-  
uid, as thoughe he complayned with  
God, cryeth out : where bee thy olde  
mercies, good lorde ? Againe in the  
psalme . 106 . Let the mercies of the  
lorde be confessed to him, and his mer-  
uaylles, of the soonnes of men : whi-  
che verse, as it were enterlined, is ofte  
repeted in the same psalme . In the  
psalme also that goeth next before, he  
saith : And he gaue them vnto his  
mercies, in the syght of all those that  
toke them . ¶ He saied mercies, be-  
cause he had reherſed many wycked  
deedes, with whiche he prouoked the  
angre of god . ¶ And Dauid, beyng  
on all partes oppressed with euylles  
saith : It is better, that I fall in the  
handes of the lorde (for manifolde at  
his mercies) than into the handes of  
men . ¶ As in one offence often times  
are many synnes, so lyke wyse in one  
mercie, many mercies are conteyned.  
¶ Ones he redeemed mankynde : And  
herein howe many folde is the mercy ?  
Whis



Which thing **I**saiaſ beholding with  
the eye of **I**saieth, speaketh thus in the  
persone of god, promysing our sauiour  
**I**esus: And **I** wyll make with you a  
couenaunt everlasting, the saiethfull  
mercies of **D**avid. In a lyke figure,  
god beynge appeased, speaketh in the  
prophet **H**ieremie: And **I** wyll geue  
you mercies, and wyll haue pitie vpon  
you. For many greuous synnes,  
many mercies are promysed. Lyke  
wyle after many afflictions, god ha-  
uing pitie of his people, speaketh thus  
in the prophet **Z**acarie: **I** will retorne  
to **J**erusalem in mercies, and my hous  
shall be buylded. ¶ But why reherſe  
we those thynges, out of booke of the  
olde testament, in which so oftentimes  
the name of mercies is encountred?  
And yet some heretykes beleue, that  
the same lawe procedeth of god, being  
iuste and not good: whan it sheweth  
nothyng elles but the mercyes of the  
lorde. Wherby it is lesse to bee mer-  
uayled at, if **P**aule the apostle in the  
ii. pistle to the **T**heſſal. accordyng to  
the woordes of the prophet writeth in  
this wyle: Blessed be god, and father  
of our lorde **J**esu **C**hriste, father of

**Esa. lvi.**
**Hier. xlii.**
**zach. i.**
**Cap. i.**

## De misericordia

mercies, and lordc of all consolacion, which comforteth vs in all tribulacion. The apostle layeth somwhat more to mercy: For it is a poynt of mercy to pardone offence done: here (whiche is muche more) God of a reuenger, is made a comfortour. These thynges we haue recited out of the holy scripture, to the entent that we, by that figure of speakyng, myght vnderstande the signified excedyng and vnspeakable mercy of god towarde vs all, and in all euyls. The same is shewed by an other figure, whiche is eyther Anadiplosis, that in latine one maie call Conduplicatio, or els nerest to Anadiplosis. for as the hebrue call that good good, the whiche they reken to be excedyng good, and pll pll, that is excedyng pll: so lykewise in holy scripture God is ofte called pitiefull and mercifull, for the excedyng greatnesse of his mercie. ¶ On this wise it is rede in the psalme .144. The lordc is pietifull and mercifull: and as thoughe that were but a smal thyng, he saiethe further: Pacient and much merciful. ¶ Again in an other psalme: The pietifull and mercifull lordc hath made remem-

Psal. xi.



remembraunce of his mercayles.  
 Lykewyse in Iob, Rent your hertes  
 and not your clothes: for the lord god  
 is pietifull and mercifull, and sorow-  
 yng for malyses. And in the prophet  
 Jeremie: Therfore my bowels haue  
 bene troubled vpon hym, & pietying  
 shall haue mercy on theim, saierh the  
 lorde. What is pietying to haue mer-  
 cie, but to haue mercy out of measure?  
 To this poyncte this appertayneth,  
 that sythe it is infinite, what so euer  
 is in god: yet holy wytte seemeth to  
 ascribe vnto hym a certayne ouer mu-  
 che and vnmoderate mercy, whiche a-  
 monge men sowneth vnto vyce. I  
 woulde your goodnesse shulde so take  
 this sayng, as beyng perswaded, that  
 nothyng in god sowneth to any vice:  
 ye muste vnderstande, that vnder that  
 fygure of speakyng, the holy scrip-  
 ture, submyttyng it selfe to mans per-  
 ceuyng, doeth signifie a meruarlous  
 & an incredible excesse of diuine mer-  
 cy. Whiche thyng that I make more  
 plainly speake, and ye more perfectly  
 perceyue, consyder this in your mind.  
 ¶ If a kynge shuld stablishe rigorous  
 lawes on a mankyller, and after one

Iob. ii.

Jer. xxxi.

¶

had

### De misericordia

had commytted manslaughter ones, he woulde pardone hym, maie happe it shoulde be ascriued to his clemency. But if he pardoned hym, that hadde done that myscheuous deede. x. times or more, wolde not euery man crie out and saie : The kynges clemencie is ouermuche, that ouerthroweth the strength of the lawes, and prouoketh the lewde persones to dooe wyckedly for lacke of punisshement ?

Also a father, that ones or twise for geueth his son for spendyng his money leudly awaie, maie happe shalbe called a gentill and a mylde father. If the same after shulde often tymes geue his soonne money, so lewdly wastyng it, wyll not euery man saie : He is to gentyll, and by his kyndnesse he marreth his son ? And muche more southly it might be said, if he did so to his seruant. Moreouer if an husband woulde take it in worthe, if his wife were ones taken in aduoutye : vnsdoubted euery man woulde meruayle to fynde so meke an husbände. But and the woman shoulde after breake hir wedlocke, and be taken in aduoutye againe, nowe with one and nowe with



with another, if he than toke hit to hym againe: woulde not all the people saie, he were a veraie foole, or els his wyues baude? But god, that is our kynge, that is our father, that is our lord, that is our spouse, dothe excepte no kynde of synne, he prescribeth no noubre of synnyng: as ofte as we amende, he releaseth our peine: whiche his euerlastyng lawe threteth, he receiveth vs into his householde, he leadeth vs into the chambere of his charitee: and he not onely receiveth vs, but also forgiveth all our offences. **The** Luc. xv.  
 sheepe that was losse, he carieth home on his shoulders to the cote againe, he stereth the congregacion of holy men to reioyce together: He meteth the riotous childe, retournyng home from fatte countrey, he offreth hym a faire gowne and a ryng, he commaundeth to kille a good fatte calfe. What thyng els signifieth all this, but unmoderate, and (if I myght so saie) overmuch mercy of God? But now it seemeth lesse mercuayle, if one man forgave an other offendyng hym, whiche also other while dooeth make offence hym selfe lykewyse, or mate of  
Lv fende:

### De misericordia

fende : if a kyng pardon hym, that sometime did him good profitable seruice : or if the father forgeue his son, whose conuersacion he feleth dooeth ease his olde age : if a maister forgeue his seruant, by whose labour he partly lyueth : if the husbande forgeue his wyfe taken in aduoutry, with whom other whyle he leadeth his lyfe pleasantly.

**A**monge men he that sometime pardoneth, dreadeth hym that he forgeueth, and other whyle he can not avenge hym selfe though he woulde. But god, that hath neede of no man, that maie with a becke destroye vs all if he wyll, being so often tymes of vs despised, forsaken, and denied : he suffereth, calleth, receyueth, and embraceth vs.

**A**s no loue is more feruente nor sweeter coniugnyng, than betwene man and wyfe : so lyke wyse no angre is harder to appease, than that is that riseth by breakyng of wedlocke. And yet here what the mylde and benygne lord saith by the prophet **Esaia**s to his spouse an aduoutrice, defiled with so many aduoutries : It is commonly  
saied

**Esa. iiii.**



Saied : If a man forsake his wyfe, and she beyng departed frome hym, weddeth an other man, shall he retourne to hir any more ? Shall not the woman be defyled ? Truly thou comyttest fornicacion with many louers, and yet retorne to me (saith the lord) and I will receyue the. A married man wyl not take his wyfe againe, the which peraduenture he forsake for a smalle faute or cause, if she after the deuorice had be wedded to an other. For wedlockes loue can not suffer the company of an other man. But yet god dooeth not disdeigne his spouse, for whome he suffered deathe, whiche for him selfe he purifyed with his bloude, the whiche so ofte wylfully renneth awaie, and abandoneth hir selfe to so many vncleane wyghtes : if she wyl retourne againe.

And it is no meruayle, if he haue ouermuche mercy, that hath ouermuch charitee towarde vs. Paule baseth not to wyte thus to the Ephesiens : We were by nature the children of angre, lyke as the other were, but god, that is ryche in mercy, for his ouermuch charitee, that he loued vs with,  
and



**De misericordia**

and whan we were deade in sinnes, he quickened vs all together in Christ.

**Jo. iiii.**

**E** John in his gospell expresteth more playnly the ouermuche charitee of the father towarde vs: God (saith he) loued so the worlde, that he woulde geue his onely begotten sonne, that who so euer beleueth in hym, shall not perishe, but haue cuerlastyng lyfe: with whome Paule agreeth tunably, writyng to the Romaines: Whiche also spared not his owne sonne, but delyuered hym for vs all: howe gaue he not vs all thynges with hym? If this so great charitee, if this so great mercy, shulde be compared to all humayne charitee and mercy, and to our merites: woulde it not seeme vnmoderate? But truelye it shall appere muche more veritable, if we consider, what he is, that so loueth vs, and so sheweth his mercy on vs: and what we be, that god vouchesafeth so great honour. Let euery man entre into the closet of his conscience, and consider howe ofte, after the name of baptisme geuen, after Satanas forsaken with his pompes, he hath forsaken the sacrament, and yelde hym to the euil

**Rom. i.**



ennemie of his spouse: howe ofte after absolucion of his synnes receyued of the prieste, he slideth into more greuous offences: ye howe ofte the same day he falleth into the selfe same, that he abhorred? Let no man (most deare bretherne) dissemble with hym selfe, who so euer stealeth or committeth aduoutry, who so euer enuieth or scandalizeth his brother, who so euer coueteth worldelye honours: leueth his spouse Christe, he turneth awaie from his father, he forsaketh his kyng, and fleeth awaie farre from his lorde.

But peraduenture we shall haue a lytell after a more conuenient place to speake of these thynges.

**N**ow to the ende ye maie more fully vnderstande, howe largely the vnmesurable mercy of god spredeth, ye muste vnderstande, that in holy writte the cleapyng of mercy signifieth some tyme lyberalitee, sometime grace preuentynge, sometyme aduauuncynge, or therwyle comfortynge, agayne other where healpnge, but veray often forgeynynge, or els also punyschynge. For surely after my mynde, that that our lorde speaketh in Luke: Be mercifull,  
lyke

### De misericordia

Luc. vi.

Mat. v.

like as your father is mercifull, per-  
tayneth specially to liberalitee. For  
that is perfecte lyberalitee, if one doe  
good to his enemies. Mattheu saierh  
it more playnely in a lyke saieyng of  
our lorde: We ye (saierh he) perfecte,  
lyke as your father celestiall is per-  
fecte, that maketh his soonne to shyne  
vpon good and bad, and causeth his  
rayne to rayne vpon iuste and vniuste.  
But because we haue nothing: which  
we haue not receyued freely of god,  
what euer we maie dooe or bee, what  
so euer we possesse, it is the mercye of  
god. Yea that he created the angels,  
and this worlde, is the mercye of god.  
If he had created it for hym selfe, the  
power or the wysedome myght well  
bee praysed. Nowe, seeyng he hath  
wrought all these thynges for vs, doe  
we not see the excedyng great mercye  
of god? For whom moueth the cele-  
stiall bodyes aboue? For whom shyn-  
neth the soonne by daie, The moone  
and the sterres by nyght, but for man?  
For whose profite were all these thin-  
ges wroughte, whan they were no-  
thyng? For whose sake make the  
hangyng cloudes shadowe, and moyst  
the



the feedes? For whom bloweth the  
 wynde? For whom renne the ryuers,  
 for whom spryng the welles, the sca  
 ebbe and flowe, the ponde stande still?  
 For whome engendzeth the plentifull  
 earth so many beastes, and bryngeth  
 forth so muche riches, but for man?  
 For he subdued euery thing vnto man,  
 he woulde man shoulde onely be sub-  
 iect to hym: lyke as Paule witnesseth  
 writyng to the Corinthis: All thyn- *Cor.iii. 23*  
 ges be yours, but ye be of Christe, and  
 Christe is of god. And it that Moy-  
 ses sheweth in Genesis, the. viii. psal. *Gen.i.*  
 repeteth, metuaplyng at the goodnes  
 of god, that of his mercy hath geuen  
 to man so many benefites. What is  
 man (saith he) that thou remembrest  
 hym: or the soonne of man, that thou  
 visitest hym? Thou haste made hym  
 littell lesse than aungles, thou haste  
 crowned hym with glorie and honoz,  
 and hast sette hym aboue the workes  
 of thy handes. Thou haste subdued  
 all vnder his feete, shepe and oren e-  
 uerichone, yea and more ouer, beastes  
 of the feede, byrdes of the yare, and  
 fyshes of the sea. I will saie yet that  
 is hygher: We be bounde to the mer-  
 cy

**De misericordia**

cy of god for the heauenly aungels.

**Heb. i. 14**

Believe not my worde, without Paule teache it plainely, wytyng to the Hebrewes, and speakyng of aungels.

Be not (saith he) all spirites seruantes, in seruice sent for theyr sake, that receiue the inheritaunce of saluacion?

And both in the olde and in the new testament we often rede, that by ministracion of angels the hungry were refreshed, prisoners deliuered, countreys ouertonne, and the good people comforted with ioyfull tydynges.

**Mat. xviii**

Whoreouer our lord hym selfe in the gospel saith: Theyr angels beholde alwaie the face of the father, that is in heauen. What is more mercifulous than this worthynesse, angels to be geuen to sely men as gouernours to children? Therefore what so euer thou hast man (truely thou hast all thynges whyle thou remainest in Christe) thou shouldest reken to haue it all of his mercy. Otherwyle Paule wyll stampe and crie out vpon the: what hast man, that thou hast not receiued? And if thou hast receyued it, why magnifiest thy self, as though thou hadst not receiued it? Farther, what suppl  
so

**Diminishing  
mercy.**



so euer thou seest in other, aknowledge  
the mercy of god preuenting the: wher  
of Dauid, not in one place, saith:  
And his mercy shall preuent me.

**T**hou arte no bastarde borne, nor  
lame, nor blynde borne, thou arte not  
poore, nor dulwytted, lyke as many be  
borne, geue thanks to the mercye of  
god, that hath preserued the. What  
so euer hurtes happen to an other mā,  
myght haue chaunced vnto the, had  
not the mercy of god defended the.

**A**gainc, thou arte none aduoutter,  
no faulse forsworer, no mankyller, no  
churche robber, lyke as (alas) ouer  
many be, aknowledge the mercy of god  
for suche one thou shuldest haue bene,  
if the mercy of god hadde not preser-  
ued the.

**A** man on a tyme, that coude good  
skille in phisnomy, iudged Socrates  
to his disciples, to be a man desirous  
of ryot, and ouermuche geuen to le-  
chery: they knowyng theyr maysters  
incredible temperaunce, partly lau-  
ghed hym to scorne, and partly dis-  
deigned him. Socrates blamed them,  
and praised hym, sayng: He hath de-  
med of me veraiely truly, for all this

D

had

### De misericordia

had I bene, if philosophie hadde not taught me temperaunce. ¶ But muche more southly the ryght holy man Frauncis ascriueth vnto gods mercy, that Socrates yeldeth to philosophie. ¶ For on a tyme, whan his felowe (by hym commaunded so to doo) had reuiled hym with what so euer woordes a mischeuous caytiue is woune to be rebuked, calling hym churche robber, mankiller, backebiter, poller, and poysoner: he toke it mooste patiently, and bewayled hym selfe, that he was such one. ¶ And an other time, whan his felowe asked hym, why dooe yea compell me to make so many lyes vpon you an innocente, for none of all these thynges are in you? he answered: Thou docest not lye, for all this had I ben, yea and muche worse, had not the mercy of god kepte me his seruauant from those synnes. ¶ And the mercy of god doeth not onely preserue and prouoke vs to goodnesse, but also helpeth vs enterprysing, accompanieth vs goyng forth, and in conclusion geueth vs might to perfourme that that mans myght and strengthe coude not dooe. ¶ He seemeth the apostle Paul

Signis



signifieth suche a maner of mercye in many places, but specially in greetings, besechyng grace and peace. In the pistels to Timotheus also he addeth mercye. And surely, without prejudice of a better sentence, if any haue it to shewe, I thynke grace perteyneth to the calling of vs, for we be called by faith, that is beleue. And this faith is the free gyfte of god: And therefore they, to whom it happeth, are for it bonde to the mercye of god.

¶ Mercye perteyneth to dyuers gyftes, distributed to euery man after the measure of his fayeth. ¶ Peace longeth to the innocency of al the life, without whiche, frendshyp with god can not be had, nor true con corde with our bretherne.

¶ Veraiely as oft as we be deliuered from euyls, that we be greued with, we shulde not repute it to the sterres, to Fortune, nor to our prudence: but we ought to ascriue it all wholly to the mercye of god. ¶ No man intangled in the bondes of synne, can be deliuered, except he be holpe by the mercye of god. This teacheth the psalme. 129. For the lord hath great mercye,

Dii

and

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and in hym is plentiful redempcion,  
and he wyll redeeme Israel frome all  
the iniquities therof.

**E** farther, that the mercy of god de-  
lyuereth vs also from bodily harmes,  
Paule declareth, wrytyng to the Phi-  
lippienses: Epaphroditus was sicke,  
yea nere dead: but god (saith he) did  
pitee hym, and not onely hym, but al-  
so me, lest I shoulde haue had sorowe  
vpon sorowe. For there is no diffe-  
rence betwene mercye helpyng, and  
mercye comfortyng, saue that we bee  
holpe, whan the euylles been taken a-  
waie, that greued vs: but mercye com-  
fortyng is at hande, as ofte as in the  
middles of afflictions it tempereth the  
greeke of aduersitee, with mynglyng  
of ioyfull thynges, causynge fruite  
through temptacion, as Paule saith,  
wherby we maie susteyne it. And the  
same euyls ofte tymes are sent of god,  
pitirng vs, wherby he wyll eyther  
purge vs from our yll deedes commit-  
ted, or els to withdrawe vs, that we  
committe no mo, or to minstre to vs  
matter to exercise vertue. **I**n suche  
wyse Abraham was tempted, so Job  
was exercysed in dyuers troubles:  
and

well mynd  
ys due.

13



and so, who so euer lyued well in Iesu Christ, were in this worlde proued by dyuers afflictions, as golde is proued in the fyre.

**W**here be they that mourne against god, as oft as to them happeth bodyly sicknesse, or deathe of theyr children or wife, or as oft as they haue losse of householde stouffe, or as ofte as the frutes of theyr feilde faylen, not vnderstandyng these thinges to be the mooste certayne tokens, that god hath pitee on vs. Lear vs rather here what Salomon monyfyeth vs to do. My son, cast not away the teaching of the lord, nor forsake hym not, whan he correcteth the: For hym that the lorde loueth, he correcteth, and deliuereth in him as a father in his child. Paule to the Hebrues repeteth this sentence, changyng somwhat the wordes. For whom the lorde loueth, he chastyseth: he scourgeth forsooth euery childe that he taketh to saluacion. **T**herefore mooste welbeloued bretherne, as oft as the storme of aduersitee assaileth you, contynue in discipline, as Paule counsaileth, knowyng, that god offereth hym vnto you as vnto chylde.

*Prover. iiii*

*Heb. xii.*

*Ibidem.*

## De misericordia

**T**here the voyce of the father mercifull  
fullye correctyng his childrene in the  
psalme . 88. If they violate my iustices,  
and kepe not my commandementes:  
I wyll visere their iniquitees by the  
rodde, and theyr synnes by beatyn-  
ges. **B**ut I wyll not throwe my  
mercy from hym, nor wyll not hurt in  
my trowthe. And lykewyse Paule  
thetneth the children that he loueth,  
sayng: What will ye? Shall I come  
to you by the rodde of correction, or in  
the spirite of kyndenesse and meake-  
nes? **B**ut the same Paule saieth:  
What needeth me to iudge of them  
that be without? No voyce is more  
bitter and sharpe vnto childrene, than  
to here theyr father saie: Dooe what  
yea wyll, I care not. For thus saieth  
he, that myndeth to disherite. Sure-  
ly this fatherly kyndenesse is sharper  
than any chydnyng. **T**herefore as  
sufferaunce is cruell, so correction is  
mercyfull. The iust man saieth: He  
shall correct me in his mercy, and shal  
rebuke me: but the oyle of the synner  
shall not greace my head.

**P**aulus Emilius the Romaine ca-  
pitaine, whiche beyng prosperous in  
al

89 *psalm 32*

*1. Cor. xiii.*

*Ibidem. v.*

*Psalm. cxl.*



all his deedes, deemed, that some  
great euill was hangynge ouer his  
heade. And Polycrates, the tyranne  
of Samiens, soughte meanes howe  
with the losse of a rynge most preci-  
ous, he myght redeeme the enuie of  
fortune, that alwaie smyled on hym.  
How muche more ought we to dread,  
lyuyng wyckedly, least the iust venge-  
aunce of god hange ouer vs, whan the  
prosperitee of temporall goodes flat-  
ter vs longe tyme? ¶ For whan god  
in the prophesies wyl expresse his vn-  
speasable angre, he threteth to take  
awaie his rodde from theim, and that  
by afflictions he wyl not redresse their  
synnes. ¶ God kepe vs (moste deare  
betherne) from suche felicitie. But  
rather if the mercy of our father bou-  
checase vs to haue anye wealthe, we  
shoulde thanke hym, and be carefull,  
least we at any tyme shulde abuse his  
liberalitee. And if aduersities greue  
vs, we shoulde none otherwyle than  
kyng hym, submitte vs wholly to his  
arbitrement. To haue health of bod-  
dy, thou submittest the to the phisicia-  
on a man, thou sufferest the surgian to  
bynde, to cut, and burne: and wilt not

Ditt

thou

**De misericordia**

**II. Cor. xii.**

thou submyt the to thy maker, to thy  
lorde, thy father, and sauour, that  
thou maiste gette thy soule healthe e-  
uerlastyng? Thou darest not apoint  
thy leche, and saie thus and by this  
reason heale me: and shall we condi-  
cion with god, howe he shuld prouide  
for the healthe of our soules? Wauld  
the apostle suffred the angel of the de-  
uyll to assaile hym, and geue him buf-  
fetres: for so it was expedient to re-  
ceyue the gastes that he had receyued.  
Whan I am weake (saierh he) than  
am I stronge. And he glorifieth glad-  
ly in his infirmities, that he myghte  
haue the vertue of Christ dwell styl in  
hym. What be we, that refuse this  
mercy of god, by dyuers afflictions,  
as it were with bytter playsters, pro-  
curyng our healthe?

¶ Whan the common people see one,  
that is discended of hyghe linage, and  
hath abundance of ryches, healthe of  
body, and heaped in honours, they are  
wont to saie: How muche is he bound  
to god? Thus iudge thei, that esteeme  
felicitie in those thynges, that be seen  
outwardely. But he that examinerh  
the thyng after the iudgement of god,  
shall



Shall finde ofrentymes the low byrth,  
the poore, the spckely, and the outcast  
among men, more bounde to the mer-  
cy of god, than these ioly felowes,  
that the grette multitude maketh egal  
to goddes. Heape together as much  
of unweithynesse as thou wylte, tou-  
chyng this worlde, yet if thou by these  
temporal euyls maiest redeeme felici-  
tee euerlastyng, thou arte abundant-  
ly happy.

**T**hisme forgeuyng mercy, whiche  
also we cleape Clemency, euery man  
knoweth, saue he that thynketh hym  
selfe gyltles from all syn. But what  
saith the apostell Iohn? If we saie  
we be without synne, we be lyers, and  
there is no tructhe in vs. And if the  
sterres be not clere in the syght of god,  
and if in his aungels he founde wyck-  
kednes, if no creature be pure in the  
syght of god, yea not a childe of a day  
olde: whiche of vs maie glory to haue  
a chaste herte?

**M**anye seeme rightuous amonge  
men, before god no man is found iust:  
but all our ryghtousnes is as it were  
the clothe of a woman despyled with  
the menstruous flice.

D b

cepa

Forgewing  
mercy.

1. Jo. 1.

Esa. lxiii.

## De misericordia

Rom. vii.

Job. i.

Psal. cxlii.

repuyng that the carnall lawe in his membles stryuethe against the lawe of the mynde, crieth out : I unhappie creature, who shall delyuer me frome the body of this deathe? Job is with a iuste mans title honoured, and yet is not founde cleane faultles by the talskyng of god. Also the very prophet Dauid dreadeth sore the iudgemente of god, sayng that it is alaied with muche mercy. Thou shuldest not enter (good lorde saieth he) into iudgement with thy seruaunt : for truely no lyuyng creature shall be founde iust in thy syght.

**N**owe leat eche of vs enter into the chambre of his conscience, and consydre howe many waies, howe oft, howe greuouely he hath offended god, yea with what sundry byces all our good deedes are defyled : and so than he shall vnderstande, howe muche he is bounde to the exceedyng great mercye of god, that so patiently suffreth our feeblenes, that by so many occasyons stereth vs to repentance, that so swete ly forgeueth all our offences, whan we leaue our wyckednes. And to all these thynges I wyll saie this muche  
more



more, that shall seeme to some not be-  
rate probable.

**W**han god destroyeth the wycked  
lyuers, that bee come to the hyghest  
poynte of malice, and casteth theim  
downe into hell: yet euen then he for-  
getteth not his mercy.

Donys  
shyng.  
Mercy.

**H**e deluyeth the Hebrewes by di-  
uidyng of the waues of the sea, and  
drowneth Pharaon with his garde.

Exo. lill.

Mercy was on both sides, helpyng  
toward his people, and punyschyng  
toward the kynge, full of desperate  
malice, least that he shoulde, by heap-  
yng of synnes vpon synnes, purchace  
hym selfe more greuous peynes in hel.  
The healyng mercy was, that god by  
so many plagues stered hym to dooe  
penaunce: And now he, beyng assai-  
led with so many euils, began to re-  
pent: but after he repented hym selfe  
agayne of his healthfull repentance,  
and saied: I knowe no lord, nor I  
wyl not leat the people go. Nor yet  
he beyng moued with so great a my-  
racle, ceased not to pursue theim: but  
beyng blinded with angre, boldly en-  
tered into the sea, God of his mercy op-  
pressed his desperate malice, that  
whan

### De misericordia

Whan he wold not be healed, he shuld  
more easely perishe. The same wyse  
ought we to deeme of the other exam-  
ples of crueltee, that be reherfed in the  
bookes of the olde testamente: as of  
them that the fyre bourned, that the  
grounde swallowed, the sworde de-  
stroyed, that the serpentes deuoured.  
For in the gospell are veray fewe ex-  
amples of vengeance, but all of mer-  
cy. It was an easie correction, that  
Elymas stryken with sodaine blynd-  
nes, was taught, that he shoulde not  
stryue againste the woorde of the gos-  
pell. Paule deliuered a fewe to Sa-  
tan as in affliction of the fleshe, that  
the soule myght be saued at the daie  
of doome: and they corrected with  
shame, shulde tourne to better fruite.  
There is none example more rigo-  
rous, than of Ananias and Saphi-  
ras, that by Peters correction fell  
downe dead sodenely: and yet it is  
uncertaine, whether they: soules, by  
death of the bodie, are saued or no.  
Finally, the punishment, that the  
damned soules of yll lyuers suffer in  
hell, is lesse than they: merites. And  
there be some, that esteeme the mercy  
of

Act. xv.

Act. v.



of god so great, that they beleue, that the wicked spirites also and damned soules, ones after many seasons gone a boue, shall be receiued to grace.

Thoughe this opinion stayeth on a great authour, yet it hath bene repro- ued by the perfecte fathers of our laieth: whiche onely we reherse for his entent, that we myght declare, what an excedyng great opinion some men moſte highely learned, conceyued of the mercy of god: which nyght and d. ie were occuppyed in holye bokeſ, whiche ſynge, extolle, and magnifie welnere nothyng elles, but the mercy of god.

¶ Now that it is ſufficiently ſhewed, that what euer we bee or haue, tou- chyng goodneſſe, that we be defended from inuels dependyng, that we be de- lyuered from hurtes oppreſſyng, that in the myddes of tribulacions we bee reſreſhed with heaucnly counforte, that we abyde ſtronge and luſtie, that by temporall afflictions we be eyther inſtructed to repentaunce, or exerce- ſed to perfecte vertue, that our ſinnes committed, bee not to vs imputed, wherinto ſo ofte we ſlide, cometh all  
of

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of the mercy of god: And that ye make more clearly perceiue the exceeding height, breaide, and depenes therof. I praie you, that with me yea wyl a lyttell beholde your selfe inwardly: fyrste in that parte, in whiche ye bee most lothesome, and after in the part, wherby ye be excellent, and lastly yea shall regarde the euils that outwardly hange ouer you, and that beset you rounde about: and agayne loke to the bountees, of whom the hope is to you shewed. ¶ The contemplacion of al these thinges shall teache vs the largenesse of goddes mercie, wherof verily is neyther measure nor nymbre.

¶ If we beholde this smalle body of ours, the pye or lyttell house of our soule: vnto one maie fynde any beast more weaker, more lothesome, yea or more wretched than it is. If ye enquire the beginning, the fyrste of our kynde was of claye. Nowe leat euery man conside this, howe litel or nothing at all is the great pomposenes, what so euer cometh of that humour, of whose congelacion the principis of mankynde take beginning, whan as yet it is hyd in the womans wombe.

¶ Then



**T**han how farre that humour doth  
differre frome hypocras and deyntie  
meates, wherwith the childe not  
borne, is nourysched. I wyl not re-  
herse here the filthynesse of mankynde  
by the, onely that that yea haue  
ofte seene, call to our mynde. What  
is more wretched than mankynde  
by the? Howe longe, yea and howe  
perillus bee the panges of a woman  
trauaylyng? And what miserable  
wailpuges? At last the childe it selfe  
crepyng forth incontinent with we-  
pyng and wailng begynneth the life.

**A**nd where as Nature to other bea-  
stes, as soone as they come forth, ge-  
ueth dyuers couerynges or defenses,  
as shelles, barks, thicke skins, prick-  
les, heares, bristles, quilles, fethers,  
scales, flisses, and other whyle she de-  
fendeth the stumpes and trees, frome  
colde and heate, with a double barke:  
onely mankynde all naked, and on the  
bare ground, the daie of his by the  
she casteth out, forthewith to weepe  
and waile. Who woulde not iudge  
in this poynte, euen a veray chekyn,  
crept out of the broken shel, more hap-  
pie than mankynde?

Farther

## De misericordia

**F**arther more, see howe he is swad-  
led, howe his mouthe is to theles, his  
tonge speachelesse, and howe his eies  
can not abyde the newe lyght, and fa-  
reth as it wolde entre into the darke-  
nesse of the mothers wombe againe,  
that he hath leste: the moulde quae-  
reth a longe tyme, whiche is a token  
among all beastes of greattest weake-  
nesse, bryefely to speake, all the luttell  
body is weake, in whiche is no mem-  
bre, able to dooe his deutie. Mooste  
parte of all other beastes, as soone as  
they be brought forth, applie the ges-  
tes of theyr nature. Some are swift,  
as horses. Alsoone as the butterflie  
cometh out of the skynne, it fleeth:  
It is no sure wastlyng with a leons  
ynhelpe: Alsoone as fylshes be spau-  
med, they swimme: Tadpoles rollen  
themselves with a great swyftnesse  
before they maie be called, or haue a-  
ny maner shappe of frogges: what o-  
ther thing can mankinde do by course  
of nature, but onely wepe? **H**owe  
longe is he in learnyng to go? Whan  
he hath leained to goe on two feete,  
howe longe than muste he bee in lear-  
nyng to speake? yea he can not feede,  
excepte



excepte he be taught. Laie to nowe  
the manyfolde kyndes of syckenesses,  
that vneth they can be reherfed, and  
specially the newe diseases, that it is  
harde to heale them, howe bee it a-  
monge the olde, many be vncurable.

Some syckenesses take mankynde  
soone after the byrth, some also in the  
byrthe, as lepre, and the falling euyl,  
wherby many die, er they begynne to  
lyue. And all this whyle I speake  
nothyng of them, that be borne with  
many defautes of nature, and mischa-  
pen. ¶ Nowe leateche of vs consy-  
dere this by hym selfe, what damages  
he hath suffered in youthe, howe fug-  
tue youthe is, howe carefull is mans  
state, how wretched the olde age: and  
fynally howe shorte the wholle lyfe  
is, though he one happe to lyue til he be  
verraie olde, whiche yet chaunceth but  
to a fewe. Who so euer of you is at  
mans state, let hym reckon the course  
of his lyfe paste, and count from what  
syckenesses, from what great peryls  
he is escaped, and than let him thanke  
the mercy of god. ¶ Veratelly I wolde  
reken amonge bodily euyls as princi-  
cipall, the sedes of all maner vyces,  
¶ whiche

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whiche be so faste rooted in vs. How great an inclinacion to angre, to bodily pleasure, to ryot, to enuie, to ambition, to couetousnesse, to robberye, euen frome our mothers wombe haue we? where as all other beastes lyuen lawably within the desires of nature. And here with, what a labour is it to vs all, to wraastle with the leaupnges of olde Adam? and to howe fewe lucky? The soule is ouer loded with the weyght of the erthly bodie: and whether it wyll or wyll not, is drowned in these thinges, that it alloweth not. Farthermore consydre, what greatte route of euyls dooe beset vs without forth & ye shal finde that many mo perishe by chance, than by sickenes. How many be destroyed by lightnyng, earthquakes, ground openinges, lakes, floudes of the sea & riuers, infection of the ayre, venom, wilde beastes, falling of huge thinges, yll phisicions: but by no waie chaunceth greater destruction, than by warres? And yet al these mischeues thretē to destroy but the body: How many dangers hange ouer the soule? The fleche is a householde enemy, the worlde, nowe it flattereth, that



that it myght strangle vs, nowe it rageth, that it myght oppresse vs, and the wicked spiritites otherwhile transfigure them selfe like angels of light. Who dreads not of these the multitude, the powers, the disceite, the malice, and vnfaciable desyre to destroye? Nowe, who amonge these euils wold it not nereflea, death certayne to euery man, the daie vncertayne, the rigorousnesse of the extreme dome, the paines of helle euerlastyng? I see you tremble at the onely remembryng of these so great mischeues, and not without cause? but the more ye heare of euyls and dangers, the more ye bee bounde to the mercy of God, whiche amonge all these euyls not onely defendeth those that truste thereon, but also tourneth all these thynges to vs in occasion of more felicitie. What so euer calamitee we haue here, we maie wyte it the synne of olde Adam: but for the felicitie that in steede of calamitee we haue to vs yelden more plentifully, we ought to thanke the newe Adam, that is Christ Iesu, of all creatures praysed, the worlde without ende. Satanas expelled vs out of Pa-

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radise, Christe for the earthely paradysse opened vs the heauenlye kyngdome. The serpent droue vs to dyuers sorowes of this lyfe, Christe restored vs to ioyes euerlastyng of lyfe immortall. Satanas by his gyle got vs bodily death, Christe by his mercy rewarded vs lyfe eternall, to whome who so ever with a pure herte yeldeth hym, nedeth to drede no kynde of enemies. He ouercame the worlde, he baynquished all Satanas tyranny, he tourned the fleshe into spicite. That he ouercame, is of his power: that he ouercame for vs, is of his Mercy.

 Let vs honour his mercifull myght, and take fruiicion of his myghtyfull Mercy. All thynges we make doe by hym, that maketh vs myghtie, if we abyde with hym: all thynges we possesse by him, in whom is all goodnesse, euery where vs defendyng, apdyng, comfortyng, and encresing by his mercy, lyke as the prophete saith in the psalme: **Psalm. cxxi.** Mercy wyll enuiron theim about, that truste in the lorde. To what great euyls are they subiecte, that put theyr truste in bodily gesres, in ryches, in chares, in worldely prudence



dence, in theyr merites and deedes?

But by what succours is the iust man  
out of care? Truly saith he, I truste **Psal. cxv.**  
in the multitude of thy mercyes.

And a lyttel after: Lorde, as with the  
buckeler of thy good wyll thou haste  
crowned vs. When ye heare, of thy  
good wyll, yea vnderstande the hope  
of your owne merites to bee excluded.  
Where the strengthes of nature fayle  
vs, where our owne merites forsake  
vs: there mercy succoureth vs. The  
warriours shyldes couer but one part  
of theyr bodie, the buckeler of goddes  
mercy doeth sensuely couer vs all a-  
bout, aboue againste the fyrie dartes  
of wycked spirites, that hange ouer  
vs from the celestiens: beneth against  
the sleight of the serpente, that way-  
teth to attrappe vs: afore, leaste thin-  
ges present greeue vs: behynde, leaste  
thynges paste enuade vs againe: on  
the ryght hande, lest prosperitee make  
vs insolent: on the lyfte hande, leaste  
aduersitee ouerthrowe vs. Trusting  
in this buckeler David cryeth out:  
the lorde is my helper, I wyll not  
dreade, what man can dooe to me.

**Psal. cxviii**

And in a nother place: I wil not feare

**Eiii**

**athou**

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Psal. lii.

Rom. vi

a thousande people besetynge me about. But Dauid the apostle cryeth out yet more boldely, wytyng to the Romaines: If god be with vs (saith he) who shall be againste vs?

¶ This noble warriour, armed hym with all the harneis of faith, which fortifieth vs not by hope of our workes, but of diuine mercy. He beyng bolde on this armour, dyd not onely dyspyse greife, hungre, pouertee, perill, persecution: but also the tyrannes sworde, thretynng to slea hym by and by: Mans crueltie can doe nothyng, where the mercy of god is ready at hande to defende: yf this is stronger, he dispised besyde death and lyfe, angels, principates, vertues, thynges present and to come, fortitude, altytude, depthe, and so forth, if any other creature were in the heauens, or in earthe, or in hell. And this is he,

II. Cor. iii. 7. whiche knowyng his weakenesse, calleth hym selfe an earthen pottle. We haue (saith he) this treasure in earthen pottes. Fro whens than hath this bytell earthen pottle so muche strength? By the grace of god (saith he) I am that I am. What is the  
grace

I. Cor. xv.



grate of god, but the mercy of god? Let vs gladly glorifie with Paule in our infirmities, that the vertue of Christe maie dwelle in vs: for so it is more expedient for vs, that by contemplacion of our miseries, we maie glorifie the mercies of god.

II. Cor. xii.

¶ And yet the meane whyle, if it lyke the, behold thy selfe thou man, in that part that thou excellest the other beastes. For if thou esteeme thy selfe after the goodnesse of the body, thou seest, thou art lower than many brute beastes: The camels in greatnesse, in swyftnesse the tygers, in strength the bulles, in colour the swannes, in apparayle peacockes, in helthynesse the fyshes, yea if we beleue the proverbe, welnere all beastes, in quicke sight the beaste called lynx, and egles, in smellyng grypys, in longelyfe hartes and crows dooe farre excede the. And yet if one consydre the gestes of mans body, he shall here fynde, wherein he maie praise the mercy of god. What sagasitee is there of the. v. wittes, what great conformittee of the members, howe fecte instrumentes to dyuers vles? But of those thynges La-

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stantius, a man of singular eloquence, compyled a boke whiche he nameth De opificio dei. This boke is profitable to be red, if we mynde, that what goodnes so euer is in the body, cometh from the mercy of god, and oughte to be seruant lyke bonde to diuine obey-  
saunce. Otherwys he that wyll glo-  
ryfie in bodily gestes, shall by and by  
here: All fleche is hey, and all glorie  
thereof is as the flower of heye.  
Why arte thou proude, thou duste and  
ashes?

Esa. xl.  
Eccl. x.

Neither in giffes of the soule, in whi-  
che parte man is more meruaylous,  
he hath ought, that he make chalenge  
as his owne. He that made the bo-  
dye, fourmed the soule, the bodye he  
made of slime, and putte in the soule  
with inspyryng of his mouth. And  
therfore of the other beastes the soule  
and bodye peryshe together: ours is a-  
liue after the bodye tyll she receiue it  
again in the resurrection promysed.  
Nowe howe effectually a thyng the  
soule is, the veray deathe declareth,  
whiche as soone as she departeth, there  
lyeth the carkes vnproytable: where  
is the heate, where is the coloure,  
where



where is the moupng, where is the myght of all the wittes become? And yet whyle the soule is holden fast tied to this so unhappie and wretched body, doyng nothyng but throughte the bodilye instrumentes, whiche beaile oft leat the soule, that she can not put forth hir natue power. Howe meruaylous is the swiftnes and profound vnderstandyng of mans mynde?

What an exceedyng treasure hath he of remembraunce? What is so hyd in the secretes of nature, or in the heauens, or in earthe, that mans wyt can not marke, perceyue, and discusse? It is a great thyng, that many by situation and moupng of the sterres shewe, what shall fall many yerres to come: but it is more, that by thynges wrought, the euerlastyng power and godhead of the same worker is found out: Paule is wytnes sayng: Howe muche is the swiftenesse of mans wit, in howe short space, howe many thynges doeth mans wit beholde at ones? But howe exceedyng is the myght of memorie, that so truely obserueth the shappes of so manye thynges, and so many names of thynges, commytted

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to hit by the ministracion of the wittes? I wyll speake nothyng here of theim, that haue learned so many sciences, so harde to knowe, and so many langages, and that that they learned, they receyue styll. Let any of you that wil consydre how many mens faces and names he doeth remembre, how many shappes of beastes, of trees, of herbes, of places, & of other innumerable thynges he knoweth and memorially clepeth them by name. The common people call these the gesses of nature, whan in deede they be the gesses of diuine mercy, whiche are departed to euerie man, not after our merites, but after his benygnytee. And because the prodigall childe abused all these thynges to the pleasure of mans wyll, not onely that is withdrawen, that was geuen, but by grace more abundant liberalitee of gesses is added. By the lawe he instructed vs, by his soonne, whom wholly he gaue vnto vs, he taughte vs the secretes of god, by his holy spirite he enryched our soules with dyuers gesses, passing mans power. He geneth vnderstandyng of mysticall scriptures, that  
geneth



geueth lyghr and comfoite to vs in all  
euyls: he geueth knowlage of thynges  
to come, he geueth tounge to  
speake sundry langages, and power  
to contempne venome, to heale sycke-  
nesses, to reyse the dead, to confounde  
noyfull spirittes: he geueth power to  
ouercome hell gates, he graunteth vs  
to be the membres of Christe, the chil-  
dren of god, and to be parteners of the  
kyngdome celestially, that neuer shall  
haue ende. Here coumpt me, whetof  
thou were made, without doute of the  
one parte thou arte claye: than howe  
muche vnder the condicion of beastes  
synne dydde throwe the. Againe, to  
what dignitee, and to what felicitee  
thou arte called: and than thou shalt  
clearely see, that the mercyes of the  
lorde haue neyther numbze nor mea-  
sure. What is more despised than  
scarbetes? Yet is a scarbet pure in  
comparyson to the filthynesse of a syn-  
ner. What is higher than aungels?  
were it not out of all measure to make  
an aungel of a scarbet? Nowe man,  
beyng more abiecte than a scarbet, he  
made greater than aungell, I maie  
boldly saie, he made hym a god. For  
why

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**Psal. lxxxi** Why shoulde not I dare boldly saie it,  
that the scripture doeth: I saied ye be  
goddes, and excellent childrene?

What so euer cometh of god, is made  
in a maner god. What so euer is toy-  
gned to the body and spirite of Christ,  
cometh into the felowshyp and partas-  
kyng of his name.

**E** Nowe if there bee nothyng here,  
that thou maiest ascribe to thy meri-  
tes, than gloryfie the mercye of god,  
worship the mercy of god, embrace and  
kysse the mercy of god. If that any  
go aboute to claime any parte of this  
to hym selfe, Paule the apostle wil by  
and by crye out against hym, yeldyng  
all these thynges to the grace of god.

All his pistils sounde out the woorde  
of grace: whiche as ofte as thou he-  
rest, loke thou vnderstande the mercy  
of god to be to the commended.

**O**f grace it is that we bee purged  
from synne, through grace we beleue,  
of grace it is that by his spirite, cha-  
ritie is spreade in our hertes, wherby  
we dooe good workes. For we be not  
sufficient by our selfe to thynke any  
thyng, as of our selfe: but all our as-

**II. Cor. iii.** bleneste cometh from god. If Paule  
saied



saied trouthe, where be those shame-  
les felowes, that selle to euery bodye  
theyr good workes, as though they  
hadde so muche at home, that they  
myght entriche other? They be misera-  
ble, that so sell theyr good deedes,  
curled they be, that trust in mens wor-  
kes. Who that is greued with the  
fyfte disease, leat hym here what the  
church Laodicens hereth in the Apoc.  
Thou saiest: I am ryche and plenty-  
full, and neede nothyng, and knowest  
not, that thou arte a wretche, misera-  
ble, poore, blynde, and naked? But  
they also synne more greuouly, that  
of the abundaunce of theyr good wor-  
kes, promyse to other ryches. But  
what dooeth the holy goste counsaile  
suche men? I counsaile the (saieyth  
he) to bie fittie gold of me prouid, that  
thou maicst be riche in deed. And thou  
that knowest thyne owne pouertee,  
why beggest of beggers? Saint Ja-  
mes saieyth: If any want wysedome,  
leat hym aske it of god, that geueth to  
euery man abundantly, and vpbryay-  
deth none therof. Euery good geste,  
and euery perfecteste geste descenderh  
from aboue, from the father of lygh-  
tes.

Apoc.iii.

Apoc.iii.

Jac. i.

*Handwritten notes in a cursive script, likely a later addition or marginalia.*

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tes. And askest thou of a man the garment of good workes, which is so much the more piteously naked, the more gayely he reckoneth hym selfe to bee clothed: Acknowledge thy myserye, and the mercy of god is redy.

**A**monge men, whiche vpbzayde one an other of a good turne, and whiche for one pleasure loke to haue many, there is nothyng derer bought than that that is boughte with prayers: with god nothyng is so free, as that that is bought with .ii. lyttell peces of money, Prayer and Hope, for he that wyll selle his mercy, hath geuen vs the same pryce to paie for it.

we haue spoken many thynges (wel beloued bretherne) of the mercy of god, but there is muche more to saie, if we shoulde repete all thynges of holy scripture, whiche dooe praisse and commend to vs the greatnesse of dyuine mercy. The remenant is, that I wyll exhorte you in fewe woordes, that none of you, throughe presumption dooe make hym selfe vnwoorthy of the mercy of god, that is so ready: or throughe euill courage of mynde, do despexe of the mercy of god. And after



ter we wyll shortly declare, what thynges dooe prouoke the mercye of god. And so make an ende of our sermon, if the mercy of the lord be vouchesafe to be present and fauourable vnto me speakyng vnto you.

**G**od abhorreth nothyng so muche i. Pet. v. as pryde and obstacienes, for he resisteth the proude, and geueth grace to the humble. To this blinde madnes and madde blyndenesse, manye are brought throughe prosperitee of temporal gooddes, the whiche beyng as it were forgetfull of theyr maker, doo lyue after their pleasure, so muche vnthoughtfull to amende their lyfe, that thei boste theyr vngaciousnes, and are stronge and myghtye in wyckednes. And as we reade in an nother place: They boste theyr euill doyng, and reioyce in mooste vngacious actes:

Wherof Salomon writeth: The wicked man, whan he cometh to the bottom of euyls, is careles. And of suche men Paule wryteth: God geueth thein a peruerfed iudgement, to dooe those thynges, that be not comely.

Some of those promyse thein selfe, that they shall scape unpunysshed for euer

Jac. iiii.

Psal. li.

Prover. ii.

Ibidem, xviii.

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Deut. v.

euere, and they dispise hollesome monition, and wyll not here of suche thynges, as shoulde prouoke them to repentance, saieyng thus: Let god haue heauen to hym selfe, leat hym leaue vs the earthe. Of these speaketh Moyses in his canticke, whan he had remembred many great benefites of god dooen to the people of Israell, he saith thus: My welbeloued is waxed grosse and kycketh: he is waxed fatte and brode: he hath forsaken god his maker, and is departed from god his saviour. The psalme. 72. peyncteth out this maner of men: They be not in the labour of men, and they shall not be scourged with men. Because pryde reteyneth theim, they be couered with iniquitee and with their wyckednesse: they be gone into the affection of hearte: They haue thought and spoken leudenesse, and they haue talked wyckedly againste almyghtie god. They haue sette theyr mouthe against the heauen, and their tounge is gone ouer in earthe. But hearken what ende foloweth this unhappie felicitie. But yet for all theyr wyles, thou hast begyled them. thou



thou dydst caste theim downe, whan  
they woulde haue rylen vp. Howe  
were they discomfited? they layled  
sodeynly, and perished for theyr wyck-  
kednes. Good lord, in thy citee thou  
shalte reduce the image of theim to  
naught, as the dreame of theim that  
ryse from slepe.

**T**On those, whiche folowynge Lucis  
fers example, dooe ryse vp againste  
god, shall fall that our lord threteth  
in the gospell: I sawe Satanas as  
lyghtryng falle frome heauen. And  
Corozaim throughe abundaunce of  
transitorie thynges wyckedly swel-  
lyng, hereth: Woe to the Corozaim,  
for thou that arte nowe lyfte vppe to  
heauen by thy pryde, shalte be plucked  
downe to hel by the vengeance of god.

Luc. 12.

**S**aule also sometime on trust of his  
countrey lawes was fierse and proude,  
and thretned to slea the disciples of  
our lord: and he for it (by the ryght  
hande of god) beyng ouerthrowen to  
the earth, doeth here these woordes:  
It is harde for the to kycke againste  
the prycke. But because in his deede  
was errour and not waywarde ma-  
lice, he obteyned Mercy. As soone

Act. 13.

X

as

## De misericordia

Job. xxi.

Esa. xx.

as he acknowledged his synne, god forgaue hym, and not onely byd forgeue hym, but also of a wolfe made hym a shepe, and of a tyran apostel. But the curse of god hangeth ouer those, that continue in synne, and at last they being indurated and obstinate therein, will not vnderstande to do wel, which saie to god: Go thy waie from vs, we wil not knowe thy wates. Again, that Esaie speaketh of, which the lord calling to wepyng, waillyng, cuttyng of theyr heare, and to weare shertes of heare, make myrth and reuell, kyllyng calves, and sacrificyng sheepe, that they maie eate the fleshe, and drynke wyne, sayng: Let vs eate and drynke, for to morowe we shall die. And they, (as the same prophete saith) that scorne the threthynge of God, sterpyng them to repente: Byd byd againe, byd byd againe, abyde abyde againe, abyde abyde agayne, a lyttell there a lyttell there. And the whiche saie agayne in an nother place: We will not here the lorde, but we wyll die in our synnes: To these, as the olde prouerbe saith, Patience ofte greued turneth into madnesse:  
and



and the mercy of the lorde beyng despised, is touned into greuouſer damnacion. For the lorde mocked in this ſaie answereth after: The ſaieyng of the lorde to them ſhall be: Byd byd agayne, byd byd agayne, abyde abyde agayne, abyde abyde agayne, a lyttel there a lyttel there, that thei maie go and falle backwarde, and be all to rent, and attrapped, and taken.

Theſe vnhappie people wandre forth, lette in theyr euill deſpyes, alwaie warpyng wooſe, thei fal into the pitte of wyckedneſſe, they be rangled in the cordes of synne, they be taken in the nette of euerlaſtyng dampnacion, lea- dyng theyr daies amonge theyr good- des, and in a moment they go to hell.

O veray wretched creatures, and hol- ly geuen to diſtruction, whiche lyke as it were beaſtes, be ſatted to be kyl- led, whome neyther the enormitee of synne maketh to forgette pryde, nor ſo great kyndnes of god tendreth them to repent. The mercy of god ſuffreth the, ſo ofte to synne, that thou ſhouldest amende, he geueth the ſpace to repent, and in the meane whyle he taketh not from the his benygnitee, he geueth the

If u

good

Y3  
Esa. xlviii

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good health, he geueth the ryches, he geueth the other commoditees of the lyfe, as in a maner setting vp and casting coles of fyre ouer thy heade, that if thou canste not hate thy synne, for that it is moste shamefull of it selfe, yet at the least thou shouldest begynne to hate it, sithe it displeaseth so louing a father.

**T**eschinus, a younge man, perceyving in a plaie the meruaylous kyndnesse of his father towards hym offending, was so moued, that from thensforth he woulde haue his father in greatter reuerence, and these bee his woordes: what thing is this? is this to be a father, or is this to be a sonne? If he were my brother or felowe, how myght he folowe more my mynde? Is he not to be loued? ought he not to be borne in mynde? Ah, he maketh me ryght carefull with his gentylnesse, least I shulde vnware dooe any thyng contrary to his mynde, for wittingly I wyl be ware therof.

**I**f fatherly kyndnes dooeth teache wittye childrene to hate synne, thou unhappie sinner doest thou ware more and more obstinate for so great goodness



nesse of thy father, and hearest not  
 Paule calling the agayne from mad-  
 nesse? Dooest thou despise saierth he,  
 the ryches of thy goodnesse, patience,  
 and meakenesse? Knowest not, that  
 the gentylnes of god leadeth the to re-  
 pentance? But after thy hardnesse,  
 and thyne vntrepentance herte, thou  
 getherest vnto the a treasure of angre  
 in the daie of angre, and reuelacion of  
 the iust iudgement of god.

**T**here is no beast so wilde, but that  
 by mens diligence and labour maie be  
 tamed: and thou, beyng prouoked by  
 so excedyng great goodnesse of god,  
 dooest thou yet waxe more fierse a-  
 gainst hym? There is no thyng so  
 harde, but that it maie be made softe  
 by crafte of men. Brasse melterth in  
 the furneis, yron by fyre is made soft,  
 horne, with ware poured in, doerth  
 ware souple, the inuincible hardnesse  
 of the diamonde is overcome with  
 gottes bloude: And, O herte more  
 harder than the diamonde, that ney-  
 ther the fyre of hell, nor the kyndnesse  
 of thy moste gentyll father, nor the  
 bloude of the vndefyled lambe, that  
 was shed for the, can mollifie. Now

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bee ioyfull, triumphe in thy wyckednesse, thou haste ouer come wretche, thou hast overcome diuine craft, whiche is moſte vnhappie victorie.

Heb. vii 8

**U**nhappy is the ground (as Paule ſaieth) and neereſt to the curſe of god, whiche whan it receiueth oft heauenly moyſtenelle, dooeth brynge forth none other thing but thornes and weeds: how muche more vnhappie is he, that is ſo ofte moyſted with the rayne of diuine mercy, and waxeth harde as any roughe ſturdie ſtone, that he will receiue no printe of the holy goſt?

**T**he ſpynger of god dydde write the lawe of Moyses in ſtonye tables, ſo that thy herte is ſturdier than theſe ſtones, wherin the holy goſt can write nothing of Chriſtes lawe. who ſhall cutte vs theſe ſtonye hertes, but he, whoſe deathe cloued the ſtones, that they myght goe out of theyr tumbes, that were deade? Who ſhall geue vs a fleſhy herte, but the woorde of god, that for vs was made fleſhe?

But yet they be more desperate than theſe, whiche reioyſyng in theyr ſynnes, doe ſpreade abroad blaſphemous and wycked opinions, denyng god to  
be a



be aboue: or if he be, that mortall folkes busynes pertaine nothyng to him: to be no life after the deathe of the body: nor no immortalitee to be prepared for those, that liued here deuoutly in Christe Iesu: nor hell to be prepared for theim, that serue the deuyl here: and that the thretynnges of holy scripture be in vayne: that the promyses of the gospell be lyes: or they, that by wronge expoundyng of scripture, defende theyr myscheuous deedes for good actes: and the woorde of god (wherby the euyl despyres of the mynd ought to be corrected) thei compell to supporte theyr fylthyneſſe, to other crimes they laie the wyckednes of heresye, as moſte wooste rebuke.

¶ The palenesse, whiche for greatte ſkele appereth in your faces, and the trembl yng of the wholle body, doeth shewe, howe muche yea abhorre that ye haue herde. But woulde to god, we shoulde not here those thynges amonge chryſten men. I haue shewed you Scylla, on whiche rocke many renne and peryshe. Nowe I wyll shewe you Charibdes, a daunger greuouser than the moſte greuous, and

### De misericordia

more ferefull. They be those, which  
(folowing Caine and Judas the tray-  
tour) despayre of forgeuenesse swa-  
loweth in to euerlastyng distruction.

There is but one distruction, though  
the reason of peryschyng be dyuers.

Exod. v.  
Gen. xlii.  
Ex. xxvii

Pharao indurated saith: I knowe  
no lord, nor I wyll not leat the peo-  
ple goe. What saith Caine? My  
sinne is greater, than that I maie de-  
serue pardon. And what saith Ju-  
das? I haue synned, betrayng the  
innocent bloude. Bothe they aknow-  
lage the greatnes of theyr sinne, both  
confesse it, bothe repente theyr mys-  
deede, but bothe they go awaie frome  
the face of the lord, in whom onely is  
mercy and plentiful redemcion from  
synnes. For thus ye rede of Cain:

Gen. xlii.

And Cain goyng awaie from the face  
of the lord, dwelled as a renue a gate  
in a countrey towarde the East. &c.

Jo. xlii.

And Judas, departyng from the ban-  
ket of saintes, returneth not agayne:  
He is unhappie, that so goeth frome  
the face of the mercy of god, that he  
retourneth not agayne. This is he  
(I thynke) that Jeremias meaneth  
whan he saith: weepe not for the  
deade

Jer. xx.



Deade, ne mourne not for hym : be-  
waille hym with wepyng, that goeth  
out, because he retourneth no more a-  
gayne. He wyll not haue the deade  
to be wepte for, because sometyme he  
musste aryse agayne. He shulde be be-  
wailed, with all maner wepyng, that  
turneth hym selfe awaie from the wel  
of euerlastyng lyfe, and dooeth neuer  
retourne agayne by penaunce, thither,  
from whens he went.

**H**e, the prodigall and riotous  
childe wente awaie into farré coun-  
trei, he lefte the house of his moste lo-  
uyng father: but he is returned home  
agayne. Peter swarued farré frome  
our lord, whan he forsoke him thysse:  
but shortly after he came agayne:  
whan he remembred the woorde that  
Jesus spake, he beganne to wepe bit-  
terly. He had forgotten hym selfe,  
but whan he came to him selfe agayn,  
he returned to Jesus. Liphewyle  
saie cryeth out: Remembre ye this,  
and bee ye confounded, and you syn-  
ners come to your hert agayne. Peter  
remembred hym selfe, and returned  
to his herte: the stonye herte, and the  
promise herte, was taken from hym,

Luc. xv.

Mat. xliii.

Esa. xlii.

fb

out

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Mat. xxvii

out of the whiche no droppe of teares  
coude be got, a fleshlie herte was ge-  
uen hym : out of the whiche anone  
sprange a well of teares, veraiie bitter  
for the sorowe of penaunce, but hol-  
some for the innocencye to hym restor-  
red. But Judas is not retourned to  
Jesus, but he went awaie to the prie-  
stes and pharisees, he yelded agayne  
that wofull money : frome thens he  
ranne to the snare, and brake a sundre.  
These thynges our lord suffered a-  
mong his disciples for our instructiō.  
**E**ye see, how diuers was the ende of  
two apostles synnyng. Judas, that  
was so ofte prouoked by our lordes  
mekenes to be sorow and amende, sticke  
still in his wycked purpose. But Pe-  
ter, at the lokyng of Jesus vpon hym,  
remembred our lordes sayng, and by  
and by he knewe hym selfe, and as vn-  
woorthye of our lordes presence, he  
drew abacke, not to hange hym selfe,  
but to weepe, that is, not to despayre,  
but to remedy. Judas folowynge  
Cain, the authour of this mischietfe,  
aknowlaged truely the greatnesse of  
his synne : but he remembred not the  
wordes of our lord, that euerie where  
in



in holy scripture do prouoke vs to re-  
 tourne, that stee vs to dooe penaunce,  
 and that promise vs mercy. For what  
 padge is in holy scripture, that coun-  
 deth not the mercy of god? I speake  
 not onely of the newe testament, whi-  
 che is the law of grace, but also of the  
 olde tastamente, whiche is thoughte  
 more rigorous.

**L**eat vs heare, howe gentylly the  
 lorde in the prophete Hieremie (vnder  
 the persone of the spouse that leaueth  
 hit husbande, and abandoneth hir e-  
 uery where to euery body) reclaimeth  
 his people to penaunce: Turne to me  
 (saith he) ye children retournyng a-  
 gaine, saith the lorde: for I am your  
 husbande. And in Job the lorde ope-  
 neth the eare of the synners, that he  
 maie correcte them: and he speaketh,  
 that they shoulde retourne from wy-  
 kednesse: But they be wretches, that  
 against this the lordes voice stop their  
 eares lyke the desse serpent, that stop-  
 peth hit eares for the nones, leaste he  
 shoulde heare the enchanter wylfely.

To daie (saith the psalme) if ye maie  
 heare his voyce, loke ye be not harde-  
 nerted. To daie is ours, as longe

Hier. iii.

Job.  
xxxvi.

Psal. xlv.

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as we bee in this lyfe, whiche all the  
wbole it lasteth, our lord cefteth not  
to fpeake to vs, fter yng vs to dooe pe-  
naunce, and offer yng for geueneffe re-  
dy prepared. What, faied I for ge-  
ueneffe? The mercy of god is more,  
whiche promyseth to theim that re-  
tourne to god, a precious gyfte. For  
this we reade in Job: If thou wylt  
retourne to almyghtie God, thou shalt  
be edified, and shalt boyde wycked-  
neffe farre from thy tent: for earth he  
shall geue the a flynte ftone, and for a  
flynte ftone golden ryuers.

**Job. xx.**

**Esa. xxi.**

¶ Let vs heare the mercy of the lorde  
in Ifaie, fter yng vs to repentaunce:  
If ye feke (faieyth he) feke, retourne  
and come: if ye feke the ende of euyls,  
feke it not of the childeene of men, in  
whom is no faluacion, nor of enchan-  
tours, nor by hang yng your felfe: but  
afke it of me, that alone both can, and  
am redy to for geue. Onely retourne  
frome thofe thynges, that you fylthi-  
ly haue loued: and beyng tour ned,  
come to me. Againe in the fame pro-  
phete, entreyng all mankinde to him,  
he faith: Am not I the lorde? and there  
is none other god but I: God iuft and  
holy

**Esa. xlv.**



holy is none besyde me: retourne to me, and ye shall be saued all the costes of the earthe, for I am god, and there is none other. These woordes the lorde speaketh to gentylles, idoltwoꝝ, hyppers, to mankillers, churche robbers, lechers, blasphemers: and thou wretche, wylte thou despayre, and tourne awaie from the lorde?

**I**n olde tyme whan synne reigned unpunysched amonge the people, the mercy of god seemed to be drawe within the narrowe boundes of Judee.

But by the gospel mercy dyd spreade ouer all costes of the worlde. In heremie also he threteth them that be obstinate, but he offreth to them forgiveness redy prepared, that repente and amende: If the people (saith he) will do penance for theyr synne, that I haue spoken agaynst them, I will also dooe penance vppon the harme, that I thoughte haue done them.

And he that a lyttell before threted destruction, pluckyng vppe by the rootes, and sparklyng abrode, promyseth thinges contrary: and sodeinly saith: I wyl speake of the people and realme, that I maie edifie it, and that

Her. xlviii.

## De misericordia

Ezech.  
xviii.

I maye plant it. **¶** Lyke wyse in Ezechiel he not onely promyseth hym pardon, that forsaketh synne, but also that he woulde forgette all the synnes that he had dooen before: For whan he had afore remembred all sortes of wyckednesse and dampnable deedes, he saith: If the wycked man will do penance for all the syns that he hath wrought, and will kepe all my commandementes, and will dooe iudgement and Justice: he shall lyue, and shall not die: I will not remembre all the iniquitees that he hath wrought. Is it my wyll (saith the lord) that a synner shoulde die, and not rather that he shoulde be conuerted from his synnes and lyue? And a littel after: Be ye conuerted and dooe penance for all your synnes, and your wyckednesse shall not destroye you: throwe awaye all your offences, wherby ye haue transgressed: and make you a newe herte and a newe spirite. And, why die ye the house of Israel? Because I will not the deathe of the dyng creature (saith the lord) retorne againe, and come to me.

**¶** Why despayrest thou wretche, sayth god



god for this intent sent downe his son  
into this worlde, that thou shouldest  
haue good hope: He hym selfe vn-  
doubted is the mercy of god, of whom  
Dauid saith: O god, we haue recei-  
ued thy mercy in the myddes of thy  
churche. Be thou in the churche, and  
embrace mercy. He risynge agayne cri-  
eth: I wyll not the deathe of a syn-  
ner, but rather that he shoulde be con-  
uerted and liue. Here this voyce thou  
vnhappie synner: Wake of deadely  
slepe, ryse agayne with Christe, that  
thou maicst lyue in hym. For he re-  
uiued: to the intent that the deathe of  
synne shoulde not alwaie possesse the.

Psal. xlviii

Ezech. iii

¶ And if any man suspecte, that this  
mercy of god is not prepared, nor re-  
dy, but for these that committe fewe  
and lyght synnes, leat him here what  
the lord, with a cleere voyce, promys-  
serh: Whan so euer a synner betray-  
eth his synnes, I wyll forget all his  
iniquities. He excepteth no kynde  
of synne, he pondereth not the great-  
nesse or multitud of offences. Be so-  
ry onely, and forgetfulnesse of all thy  
synnes passe, is redy. For smalle of-  
fences, without whiche mans frailtee  
liueth

**Dimitte**  
**nobis. &c.**  
**Matt. vi.**

## **De misericordia**

lyueth not, we call dailie vpon the mercy of god, sayng. Forgeue vs, as we forgeue them that offende vs; And we be herde, if we heare our neyghbour praiyng vs, that we shoulde forgeue hym. And also amonge deadly synnes there is a certayne ordre, as amonge men, some sleepe not verie soundely, so that with a lyttell whistryng, thei awake: there be that slepe more depely, that one muste speake loud to wake the: there be that slepe moste depely, that vneth with great tuggynge they wyll awake: So with god, some be lighter deede, some more greuoufly, and some moste greuoufly. But no kynde of death is so desperate and deadly, that he with his voyce dryueth not awaie, at whose voyce also they ryse againe, that were dead in theyr graues: and no man is taken with so depe slumbe of deathe, that is not by hym reysed agayne.

**Matt. ix.**

**3** *fold difference of synners*  
**T**his threfold difference of synners, the deuoute interpreter of holy scriptures suppose to be signified to vs, by the three corpes, that (as we reade) were reysed from death to lyfe by our lord Iesu. The maister of the synagoges



goges daughter, a mayde of xlii. yeris  
 of age, he reysed in the house, a fewe  
 beyng admitted to see it, and he for-  
 bade to tell abroad, what was doorn.  
 These be they, that fynde, not of pur-  
 posed malice, but eyther by slepienesse  
 of age, or by mans frailnes, be so sly-  
 den into some syn, that they be not yet  
 obstinate in euill, nor yet no fewle ru-  
 mour renneth of that mysdeede. Our  
 lorde Jesus lightly reiserh those with  
 puttynge forth his hande, hydryng  
 theyr fylthynesse, and prourdryng for  
 theyr shamesfastenesse: But he reysed  
 by the wy dowes sonne with more bu-  
 synesse. Nowe the carkeffe was ca-  
 rying towarde the graue, and as they  
 were goyng out lorde met with them,  
 he beyng moued with the selpe wo-  
 mans wepyng, had them stande still,  
 that bare the beere, and reysed the  
 ponge man. First he sitteth vp: soone  
 after he speaketh, whorselpe after he  
 shippeth out of the coffyn and is deli-  
 uered to his mother againe. These  
 be they vndoubtedly, that be so sette  
 ironne in synne, that they by infamy  
 cannot be reclaymed from synnyng:  
 they by open penauance lyttell and tre-

Luc. vii.

B

tell

## De misericordia

tell be reysed agayne to lyfe. **¶** He sitteth vpppe, whiche forsakynge synne, lyfteth vp hym selfe to the purpose of a better lyfe: he speaketh, that confessynge his foule synnes, acknowlargeth the mercy of god. **¶** He is yelded to his mother a lyue, that after all remedies accomplished, is restored to the communion of the churche agayne.

Jo. xl.

But Lazarus dyd nowe synke in his graue. He is bewayled onely of his desperate frendes: here Iesus bydeth to sweete hym the graue, he wepeth, he maketh grysefully sounne with his mouth, and is troubled in spirite, he commaundeth to take awaie the stone, and with a loude voyce he bydeth hym to come forth: he cometh forth, but he is bounde, he is losed, and so at laste he is yelded to his synners agayne. It was no great thyng for our lord to reyse a carkeys that laye .iiii. daies deade, it is a greater maiestrie, to reyse a synner, that .xl. yeres lyued not, but laie still stynkyng and defyled with all maner of fylthy synne. A childe (saith Esai) of an hundred yeres shall die, and a synner of an hundred yeres shall be accursed.

Esai. vi.

And



And the selfe same synner our lord  
Jesus will vouchesafe to repse, so that  
he at laste wyl heare hym calling.

He crieth dailey, arise mayden, arise  
younge man, come foorthe Lazar.

But helas, many, beyng more than  
deade, heare not his voyce calling vs  
again to lyfe. But what other thing  
is to heare, but to beleue? Incredu-  
litee or harde belefe stoppeth the eares  
of wycked folkes, that the voice of ho-  
ly scripture can not entre in to theyr  
myndes. Let vs prais the mercy of  
god, that he wyl vouchesafe to sound  
out aloude his almyghtie voyce, and  
to spnge it to those wretched and des-  
perate sinners: Thou desse and dome  
spirite, I commaunde the, get the out  
of this man, and entre no more in to  
hym.

Mar. 12.

Nowe to the ende ye maie see more  
plainely, how ready the mercy of god  
is to hym that dooeth repente and as-  
mende, here David: I haue saied, I  
wyl acknowlage againste me, myne  
vnrighuousnes to the lord: and thou  
hast forgiven me the wyckednesse of  
my synne. Not onely to one confes-  
sed, but myndyng to be confessed, the

Psal. xxxi.

But

mercy

# De misericordia

mercy of god tenneth. Be soyr, confesse the, but fear it be afore god. Ma-  
ny wayle afore men, they wepe in the  
syght of people, they confesse them to  
men, they rent theyr clothes, but it  
is afore the people, they weare the  
heate, they spynkle ashes on theyr  
heade, but it is afore the people. whi-  
che thynges if they were dooen before  
god, that is to saie, with all the hert,  
with a pure affection, the mercye of  
god ceaseth not. Cut and rent (saith  
he) your hertes, and not your garmen-  
tes. For god wyll not despise a con-  
trite and an humble herte. Fear vs  
weepe (saierh the psalme wyter) be-  
fore god, that made vs. Many fast,  
but not the faste that the lorde wyl-  
leth: many chaunge theyr rayment,  
but they chaunge not theyr affection.  
And yet it is so, that these thynges al-  
so muste be dooen amonge men, that  
they, whome our malyce prouoked to  
synne, maie be called agayne by pe-  
nauunce to amende. But these thyng-  
es are vnpofytably dooen amonge  
the people, excepte that they be spide  
dooen in the syght of god.

Judas confessed his synne, but it  
was

Johel, ii.

Psall.

12	11	2	11	10	3
2	00	1	4	6	0
2	04	2	11	19	3
12	12	1	11	19	2
2	6	2	2	2	3
1	2	3			



was to the Pharisees: if he had confessed hym to our lord, by and by the moste mylde metcy of our lord hadde embraced hym. And to the ende our confession maie be more acceptable to god, Osee the prophete setteth to vs also the fourme of confession: Take (saith he) with you woordes, and retourn to the lord, and saie to hym: Take awaie al iniquitee from vs, and receyue good, and we shall geue the agayne the calves of our lippes.

Osee. xii.

Teach vs also, that haue wandred many waies, retorne to hym agayne, that alone taketh awaie the synnes of the worlde, the whiche for our synnes, shed his precious bloude, leat vs saie to hym: Take awaie from vs all the ylle, that we haue wickedly wrought. What frely? And receiue good, what good? The calves of our lippes.

We shall geue thanks to thy mercy, wherto we be bounde for euery good dede that we did after our fall: thou shalt take from vs, that that is ours, and shalt receiue of vs that is thine.

Ye but see, howe well with hym accordeth the prophete Tobell, expres-

Tobell. ii.

syng the same sentence with other

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woordes, for whan god by hym had  
sharply thretned those, that regarded  
not his mercy, that was to them of-  
fered, this he bryngeth in afterward :  
Retourne to your god, for he is mylde  
and mercyfulle, patiente and muche  
merciful, and repenting vpon malice.  
¶ The greatnesse of thy synnes ouer-  
throweth the, but the greatnes of god-  
des mercy can lift the vp againe. Se  
by howe many waies the prophet am-  
plifieth it: He is gentil, or els in greke,  
he is mercyfull. Though this was  
enough, that we shoulde not despeire,  
yet he addeth: And hauing pitee, that  
we maie vnderstande, that he not one-  
ly helpeth vs, but also is sozie for our  
euyls. And yet herewith not beyng  
content, he addeth this woorde, pa-  
cient, that is to saie, easy, and nothyng  
hastie to take vengeance, lyke as hu-  
maine mercie is lyghtely touned to  
dysdeygne. And yet O synner, thou  
desperest. Hearken therefore what  
foloweth. And muche mercyfull.  
If thy synnes be many, mistrust not,  
for mercy is muche. What remay-  
neth now, but that thou muste be con-  
uerted and go to hym, entispyng the?  
But



But if the punishments of mercede  
 feare the, hearken and take courage :  
 And taking repentance of his malice.  
 He calleth the pynes and afflictions,  
 that are due for our synnes malice.  
 He taketh away synne, He  
 forgiveth everlasting paine, that was  
 deserved. What resteth than? no-  
 thyng, but that thou shouldest acknow-  
 ledge the mercy of god.

Undoubted this is it that followeth  
 in Jobel: And he shall leave after  
 him blessing and sacrifice to the lord  
 god. Truly this is it that I see saied:  
 The calves of the lippes, that is to  
 saie, sacrifice of praise and thanke ge-  
 uing.

If a man shoulde greuously and oft  
 offende a mortall man, howe harde is  
 the making at one, howe myndeth he  
 the wronges, howe slowly asswageth  
 the angre, howe lightly for a trifell  
 falleth he in the olde grudge, howe fro-  
 wardly asketh he amendes for the of-  
 fence: and yet if they so receyue them  
 in fauour agayne, they be called gen-  
 tyll. God beyng so ofte offended,  
 willingly prouoketh vs to repentance,  
 he entyceth vs to forgeuenesse, he par-

Doneth

Doneth

**De misericordia**

**gath. i.**

Doneth thieruynges, he forgeueth hely  
peyne, he offereth for punysshement be-  
nygnitee, yea, and he not onely tour-  
neth his face towarde the synner, a-  
mendyng and repentyng, but volun-  
taryly he meteth hym turnyng again,  
and with his armes spreade abroad,  
he wyll embrace hym, conuerted. Un-  
doubted the same is it, that he promy-  
seth in Zacarie: Turne ye to me (saith  
the lord of hostes) and I wyll turne  
to you, saith the lord of hostes.

What is that to saie, Turne ye to  
me? acknowlage your wretchednesse,  
and desyre my mercy. What is: and  
I wyll tourne to you? By and by I,  
of a reuenger and punysher, become  
an helper, wyll helpe forwarde your  
poutposes, that ye can nowdrynge to  
passe by your owne strengthes, that ye  
maie obteyne it by my fauour. Noe  
man coude hollosomely hate his synne,  
but if god granted it, except god take  
awaie the stony herte, and putte in a  
fleshye herte, but if for a despyled herte  
he worke in vs a cleane herte, excepte  
for an yll spirite, he renewe in our bo-  
wels a good iuste spirite. But why  
take I this labour, to reherse some old  
places



places of scripture, whiche declaren  
the meruallous mercy of god: All the  
scripture of the olde testament all a-  
boute, preacherh, syngerh, and layeth  
before vs the mercy of God. And  
where be those frantike fooles, rather  
than heritikes, that of one make two  
goddis, one of the olde testament, that  
was onely iuste and not good: the o-  
ther of the newe, that shoulde be onely  
good, and not iuste? Loude they not  
at the least wise heare this songe, that  
is so oftentymes reherced in the psal.  
Cxxii? At owlage to god, that he is  
good, and at his mercede is in all  
worldes.

¶ Where is madde Manicheus, that  
taughte in his booke, that he that spe-  
keth to be a louyngely by his prophe-  
tes, and that dydde ordeyne Moyses  
lawe, was no veray god, but one of  
the wycked diuels? The selfe same  
is god of bothe the lawes, the same  
trouth, the same mercy by Iesu Christ  
our lord, saue that in Moyses lawe  
be shadowes, in the Gospell is trouth:  
in the other was promyse, in this is  
performance: in that was muche and  
great mercy towarde the Jewes, here

## De misericordia

is the wholle welles of mercy, or rather the sea, that hath flowen ouer all nacions of the wholle worlde, by whiche floode the synnes of all mortall creatures are washed and scoured away. Surely this was the happie floodde of mercy: the olde floodde (a fewe beyng saued) destroyed the synners: this hollesome floodde washeth awaye the synnes, and saueth all that beleue in the sonne of god. He that in the booke of the olde testament promyseth the Hebrewes (wyllyng to repente and amende) forgeuenesse: the same beyng present in the gospel, crieth to euery man: Come to me all ye that labour and be loden, and I wyll refreche you. Take my yocke vpon you, and ye shall fynde reste for your soules. For my yocke is sweete, and my burthen lycht.

Read the life of Christ ouer and ouer, what thyng els see ye therein, but continuall mercy towarde all men? He healed sycke folke freely, he fedde the hungry, he succoured them that were in peryll, he made lepers wholle and cleane, he gaue the blynde their syght, and restored to the lame their

lims

Mat. x.



lymnes, he droue awaie diuels, he  
 reysed deade men to lyfe, he assoyled  
 them that were repentaunt. Againe,  
 serche out all his teachyng, what o-  
 ther thyng dooeth it sauer, than the  
 excedyng great mercye of god? By  
 howe many parables printeth he the  
 same in our myndes, that we shoulde  
 slyde no waie? For what other thyng  
 shewethe the parable of the sheepe  
 brought againe on the sheperdes shul-  
 ders: Of the piece of money lost and  
 found again: Of the wholle folke that  
 neded no phisicion: Of the seruaunt, to  
 whō al his ductie is forgeuen: Again,  
 of the vsurer, that forgaue bothe the  
 dettours: Of the publican & Pharisee:  
 Of him that was hurt traunaplyng by  
 the waie, whō the Samaritan healed:  
 Of the curteyle steward to his det-  
 tours, & fraudulent to his lord: Of the  
 riotous childe receiued againe? And  
 the verale cleapyng of the gospell,  
 doth it not by and by promyse mercy?  
 What promyseth it? To blinde sight,  
 to prisoners pdon, to the broken whol-  
 nesse, and shortly to speake, a peere ac-  
 ceptable to the lorde, that thyrsteth  
 none other thing but mans saluacion.

Nowe

Luc. xv.  
 Mat. ix.  
 Mat. xviii.  
 Luc. vii.

Luc. xviii.  
 Luc. x.

Luc. xvi.  
 Luc. xv.

## De misericordia

**N**owe the same name of Iesu, that  
is of a saviour, what other thyng pro-  
myseth it; but saluacion and mercy?  
If he hadde proclaymed hym selfe a  
iudge, it had ben somewhat, wherfore  
one shoulde haue been afrayde: nowe  
thou hearest Saviour, and despayrest  
thou of saluacion? And finally, to  
the ende that trust of saluacion myght  
seeme more certaine, because it wolde  
seme vnlkely, that so great a lake of  
synnes, wherwith all mankynde was  
defyled, shoulde be pouged and clem-  
sed with the bloudde of gotis and cal-  
ues: he, the veray sonne of god, got  
vpon the aultar of the crosse, and for  
our synnes, offered hym selfe moste ef-  
fectual sacrifice, to satisfie for all our  
synnes. And hangyng on the same  
crosse, he prayed for them that cruci-  
fied hym, for them that reuyled and  
rayled vpon hym: and thyngest thou,  
acknowlagyng thy synne, and sorow-  
fully besechyng his mercy, that he wil  
denie the forgiuenesse? Trust to hym,  
that is so mercifull, and thou shalte  
fynde mercy: what thyng is it, that  
faith obteyneth not of Christe? He  
that mistrusteth the physician, is his  
owne



stone leat, that he can not haue his health agayne. Truly somuche god inclineth to the praier of wretches, cripunge to hym, that he geueth mercy at an other mans praier, if he haue a good hope with hym.

**T**he Lacance crieth to him, and his daughter is made wholle: the Centurion trusteth, and his seruaunt is restored to his health: the maister of the Synagoge praierh, and his daughter is relpued: the father despyeth, and his soonne is delpued of a mycked diuell. The apostels etie: O lord, saue vs, we peryshe, and they be all saued. In many folkes he varied not the praier of the mouthe, he seeth the faithe of the cariers, and saith to the man sycke of the palsey: Truste son, thy synnes be forgeuen the. The mother onely, and they that wente with hir, wepte, and the younge man that was deade, ariseth. Martha and Mary dooe nothyng but weepe, and Lazer relpuedh. Mary the synner wepeth, she annoynteth, and kysseth our lordes feete, and she hereth: Thy synnes be forgeuen the. He praierh enoughe, that knowelageth his synne.

*San anilo*

Mat. xv. 23 24  
Luc. vii.

Mat. ix.

Mat. viii.

Mat. ix.  
Luc. vii.

Jo. xi.

Luc. vii.

acfe

## De misericordia

Mat. ix.

nesse. He praieth vehemently, that  
wepeth and hopeth. The woman  
diseased with the bloodie flire, priue-  
ly toucheth the garment of Iesu: and  
foorthwith she felte the power of mer-  
cy compyng foorth. Likewise we rede,  
that many other were cured, by tou-  
chyng the garmentes of Iesu. So re-  
dy his mercy is euery where, and at e-  
uery occasion he succoureth wretches.  
If thou darste not calle vpon Iesus,  
if thou canst not touche Iesus, at least  
couche priuely the skyrte of his gar-  
ment, go to some holy man, in whom  
this vertue shyneth, that with his prai-  
ers he maie commende the to our mer-  
cyfull lorde. For by theim often ty-  
mes he putteth foorth his power, be-  
yng redy on euery syde to geue salua-  
cion to euery man.

Gen. xlii.

Ezech.  
xviii.

¶ For that entent he came, this was  
the soode, where with he was fedde,  
that he might drawe sinners to repen-  
taunce. And in the booke of Genesis  
also, whan wicked folke by theyr mis-  
cheuous deedes hadde prouoked the  
wraathe of the lorde: yet at the prai-  
er of Abraham the lorde had forgiven  
many citees, that were appoynted to  
be



be destroyed, if he coude haue founde.  
 x. good men amonge them. The peo-  
 ple of Israel had deserued to bee des-  
 troyed, and yet the lorde, at the prai-  
 ers of Moyses, restraigneth the sword  
 of vengeance. **O** blynde and vn-  
 kynde people, that regarde not the  
 mercy of the lorde, that is so metyng,  
 and so redy euery where: but more vn-  
 happie be they, that willpugly des-  
 peyre of that, that freely is offered  
 them. He is lyghtly pleased, that  
 is not willyng to bee reuenged. For  
 what thyng souneth this voyce: And  
 why die ye the house of Israel? A-  
 gaine in an other place he betwayneleth,  
 that he all the daie had spread abroad  
 his handes to the people without be-  
 leue, and stryuyng against hym. A-  
 gayne in Micheas: My people, what  
 haue I dooen to the, or wherin haue  
 I greued the, aunswere me? Lyke-  
 wyse in Esaie: What is it, that I  
 ought to haue dooen more to my vyne,  
 and haue not dooen it? The lorde  
 dooeth euery thyng, that he myghte  
 saue vs, and we wyllfully caste awaie  
 hope of saluacion? In the gospel al-  
 so he wepeth for Hierusalem, the whi-  
 che

Mich. vi.

Esa. v

## De misericordia

**Mat. xiii.**

the throughe obstinacy of synne, caused the destruction of it selfe. Howe ofte (saith he) woulde I haue gathered the to gether, as the beane gathereth hit chekyns vnder hit wynges, and ye woulde not? Our moste mercifull lord weepeth, that he can not lesfully saue wretches, and mistruste we hym, as though he woulde not saue vs? In the gospell all the house tumbleth for ioye, that the childe that was dead, relyued agayne, that the perished was recouered agayne. He, the good father, exhorteth the wholle company of aungels and sainctes to reioyce all together, that one synner is brought agayne to penauce: and doest thou wretche dispeyre, and doest thou enuie thynne owne saluacion, and to our lord so passyng great ioye? Beleue we that he, whom the deathe of synners greueth, whom the conuertyng of wycked folke gladdeth, wyl denie forgueneste to theim, that bee sorie and amende? He calleth euery man to the bridale, he wyl haue his house ful, yea he compelleth the blind and lame to enter into his house. why sayest thou behynde wretche? why canst



canste not thou bee drawn frome the  
drasse of swyne? Why artuest thou  
agaynste the merce of the lord?

Christe is the wisedome of god. This **Prouer .i.**  
wyledome (as saith Salomon) de-  
parted out of his fathers house, came  
into this worlde, preacheth openly,  
and his voyce is hearde in the stretes.  
She crieth in the fronte of multitu-  
des, in the wyckettes of the citee ga-  
tes, she pronounserh out his woordes,  
sayng: Howe longe will ye littel ba-  
bes loue childhoode, and fooles couet  
thynges noysfull to them, and vndis-  
crete hate counnyng? Tourne you to  
my correction. Beholde I will put  
foorth the my spirite to you, and I shall  
shewe you my woordes.

**W**hat thing is more foolishhe, than  
for vayne transitory thynges to be de-  
prived of euerlastyng goodes? what  
is greater wyledome, than by worthe  
sufferaunce to gette immortalitee?

Therefore all thei be madde, that con-  
tinue in syn: thei be wise, that change  
theyr lyfe in to better. With what  
great labours scrche we out the mooste  
vyle thynges amoung mettalles, and  
this so great treasure, beyng offered

## De misericordia

to vs, and frely offered, we despise. or  
elles (that is more foolyshe) we des-  
peyre of: God is ryche in mercy.

The treasure of humayne ryches is  
consumed in geuyng awaie: the treas-  
sure of mercy can not be consumed.

And this wyll I adde theerto, that I  
maie the more putte every body frome  
despeyre of forgiuenesse: God hath  
bounde his saythe to man: and (as  
Paule saith) he can not denie hym  
selfe. He refuseth not to be blamed,  
if he perswade me not that that he pro-  
myseth. For so he speaketh in Esai  
to the people, beyng despyled on every  
syde: Be ye washed, be cleane, take  
awaie frome my syghte your euill  
thoughtes, cease to dooe wyckedly,  
learne to dooe well, seeke iudgement,  
succour the oppressed, deale truelye  
with the orphan, defende the wydow,  
and come ye and rebuke me, saith the  
lorde. Thou hearest this thou sinner,  
what thyng els requyret the mercye-  
full lorde, but onely chaungyng of thy  
lyfe: And least the enormitee of syn-  
nes shulde overpresse thy mynde, here  
the forgiuenesse of them all ready.

If your synnes (saith he) were as  
scarlet



Charlette, they shall be made as white  
 as snowe: and if they were as redde  
 as oke, they shall be as whyte as  
 wolfe. If ye will, and ye make here  
 me, ye shall eat the gooddes of the  
 earthe? Who is so madde, that will  
 not be saved? What is more easie,  
 than to heare our most louyng father,  
 nothyng commaunding, but that that  
 pettepeth to our felicitye? If ye wil  
 saith he, and ye make here. No man  
 make saue hym, that will not. Sal  
 uacion cometh by faith, and faythe  
 by hearyng. The woorde of healthe  
 is here in thy herte and in thy mouth.  
 Take thou shutte not vp the eares of  
 thy herte. Nowe if a kyng shoulde  
 saie thus to his enemies, or to suche  
 as be conuicted of hygh treason:  
 What so euer is dooen and passe, as  
 was entended hitherto, I forgeue is  
 you all: mercy is redie for all, so they  
 from thens forth the woulde abstayne  
 from lyke ylle deedes, woulde not e  
 uery body speake of the kynges won  
 derfull mercede, that neyther cruelly  
 punysseth theyr bodies, nor confis  
 keth theyr gooddes? But god, yes  
 with rewarde, caryseth vs to amende  
H H
our

**De misericordia**

our life. Ye shall eate (saith he) the gooddes of the earthe. But they bee bitterly vnwoorthy to haue the fructi-  
on of gooddes of this worlde, that by  
theyr vngacious deedes offende the  
geuer of them all. But O, howe mu-  
che more precious is it, that the gospel  
promyseth: I wyll geue you a newe  
herte, I wyll geue you a newe spirite,  
wherby, of the diuels thrals, ye shall  
be made childrene of god: wherby ye  
shall be made members of myne onely  
begotten sonne, and wherby ye shall  
entre into the heretage of the kynges-  
dome of heauen. This is (saith he)  
my welbeloued sonne, heare hym.

**Mat. iii.**

O thou Jewe, why tournest thine  
eares frome trouthe, and tournest to  
the tales of the Talmudicis, and  
Deuterotis? Thou vnwysse philoso-  
pher, why butttest thine eares against  
this teacher, and herkeneste to Plato  
and Aristotell? Why hearest thou,  
vnhappie progenie of Eve, the serpent  
with vayne promyses entysing the to  
destruction, and hearest not the sonne  
of god calling the to the company of  
euerlastyng felicitye? Dooe penance  
(saith he) and the kyngdome of hea-

**Mat. iii.**

uen



uen is at hande. The soonne promys-  
seth, the father pledgeth it, the holy  
goste in the meane whyle is geuen as  
an earnest peny: and doubtless thou to  
take and embrace so great felicitie of-  
fered vnto the?

**A**nd there is none other voyce of  
the apostels, than of the lorde. Dooe  
penaunce, and leat eche of you be bap-  
tised in the name of Iesu Christe, in  
remission of your synnes, and ye shal  
receiue the geste of the holy goste.

And a lyttell after: Kepe you frome  
this vngacious nacion, that ye maie  
be saued: leaue the spotted, the filthy,  
and the wretched lyfe, and take euer-  
lastyng lyfe.

**S**ouldiours, pu-  
blicans, harlottes, idolwo:shyppers,  
mankyllers, nigromancers, baudes,  
aduoutters, ronne hyrber. None is  
shutte without, the passage to mercy  
lyeth egally open to all. The life past  
is not regarded, so one be repentant.

For thou shouldest not suppose this  
mercy of the lorde to stretch no far-  
ther than baptisme, though Menas-  
nus shutte the church doores agaynst  
them that slide after baptisme, our  
lorde neuer shutteth the doore of the

## De misericordia

*repentant*  
heavenly kyngedome. The entrance into the church by baptism is ones geuen, the figure wherof the arke of Noe beareth, but by the Mercy of god the secounde boorde is left to euery man after the shyppe wracke, yea to come againe into the arke by ~~penitence~~. For baptism is not twyse taken, as the deathe of Christe is not renewed, but the water of teares dooeth remaine, wherewith nowe the fylthy synnes bene washed awaie, the sope of holysome contricion remaineth, and the herbe Borsith.

*repentant*  
Truely they ought (to whom ones all synnes were freely forgiven, and that were buryed with Christ by baptism, and rose with hym againe in a newe lyfe) to continue with hym in that great geste, that they receyued. But our pitiefull and merciful lord, knowing the weakenes of mans Nature, willed that remedy of ~~penitence~~ shoulde be redy for euery man even to the lyues ende. But because the daie of deathe is uncertayne to vs all, we ought to watch, least we shuld seeme to despise the goodnesse of god; But if any man happe to slide againe, by any



By he shulde haue hym to the remedy,  
 before the disease by continuance  
 were vncurable. Some in olde time,  
 to thet great peryl, forbare baptyng  
 euen to the laste daie of theyr lyfe,  
 whom some called bad christiens, and  
 some called them the yll watered, as  
 christiens not veray true: but with  
 more leoperdie the synner dooth pro-  
 longe the remedy of penance, that is  
 euerp wheredy. The christener is  
 not alwaie presente, but lyng in thy  
 bedde thou maiste confesse thyne vn-  
 rightuousnesse to the lord, and pour-  
 pose to amende thy lyfe. One is not  
 alwaie present to washe thy body, rea-  
 res bee alwaie presente, with whiche  
 thou maiste washe awaye the fylthy  
 spottes of thy soule. And not with-  
 out a cause, a doubt there is, whether  
 the baptyisme bee effectuell, whereby  
 whan there is no hope of lyfe, and  
 were in the panges of deathe, were ra-  
 ther sprinckled with water than baptis-  
 sed. For thet shewed, that they wold  
 haue synned still continually, if they  
 myght haue lyued still. But muche  
 more sauthly great learned men dout,  
 whether that penance be fruitefull,

Will

that

*repentance*

*repentance*

### De misericordia

that is prolonged of purpose, and now departing hence they take it, and would not take it, excepte death compelled them. For lyke as grounde oft moistened with heauenly rayne, bryngeth forth the naughtelles to his tyller, but thornes and wedes, is accursed and cast into the fyre: so god othertwyle, for that his goodnes is obstinately despised, endueth them with a peruerse mynde. Wherefore the surest waie is (most deare bretherne) not to prolong the amendyng of the lyfe, but by and by at the voyce of the lord, calling vs therto, to caste of the olde man, with his deedes and desires, lest the lord so ofte calling and not hearde, wyll not heare vs agayne, calling to hym. Dreadfull is the voyce, wherewith he threteth them, that wyll not heare hym mercifully calling. Because (saith he) I called you, and ye tounded awaie: I reached forth my hand, and there was none that wolde see it: ye despised all my counsailes, and did sette naught by my rebukes: I also wyll laughe and scorne you in your destruction, whan it shall fall on you, that ye dradde. Whan soderne calamytie

Prouer. i.



lamitee ouerthroweth, and ruine as a tempest dasheth downe, whan trouble and grefe assaileth: than they will call on me, and I wyl not here them. They shall asyle perly, and they shall not fynde me, because they hated my learning, and woulde not conceyue the dreade of theyr lord, and woulde not rest vpon my counsaile, and wold withdraue from all my correction.

God punyssheth dyuers waies, that he myght correcte vs. At laste, whan our obstacle stubburnesse hath ouercome all remedies, he forsaketh vs, as desperate, and leaueth vs with our owne free wyll. Lyke as a physicion, assaiying all that his craftc can do to putte aWare the disease, whan he seeth the pacient forsake all medicines, at laste he leaueth hym with his syckenes, as he that wyll not lyue.

Mercy (saith the psalme) and iudgement I wyl synge to the. The daie of iudgement abydeth all, after they shall be departed this lyfe. As long as this lyfe lasteth, there is hope of mercy. Therefore whyle thou lyuest, beseeche the lord of mercy. But they that lye in dyng, or they that extreme

Psal. c.

H v

olde

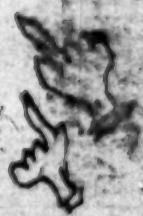
### De misericordia

olde age oppresteth, nowe in a maner  
they lyue no more. Heare the coun-  
**Ecc. xvi.** sayle of the wyse hebrewe, what euer  
thou be, that from daie to daie doest  
drawe forth the lyne of wyckednes,  
and makeste no ende of synnyng:  
Turne the to the lord (saierh he) and  
forsake thy synnes. Prase the face of  
the lord, and myniste thyne offences.  
Retourne to the lord, and rourne a-  
waie from thyne vngaciousnesse, and  
hate cursyng: and knowe the iustices  
and iudgementes of god, and stande in  
the lotte of proposicion and speache of  
almyghtric god, go into the partes of  
the iuste worlde with the lpyng and  
geupng confession to god. ¶ Thou  
shuldest not saye in the errour of wyck-  
hed folke, confesse the before deathe.  
The Confession of one dead, perpereth  
as nothyng. Thou shalt confesse the  
beyng aloue. Aloue and in healthe,  
thou shalt confesse the, and prasse  
God, and glorifye in his mercies: O  
howe great is the mercy of the lord,  
and his fauour to theim that retourne  
to hym. ¶ Thou hearest, the great  
mercy of god is redy, but that is, if  
thou beyng aloue and in health, wyle  
be



be confessed to the lord.

¶ But what shall we saie of theim,  
whose bodies be vnable to synne, and  
yet the mynde putteth not awaie the  
synfull appetite: and whan by reason  
of age the body is nere dead, that thei  
can not dooe wicked and filthy actes:  
yet than they leaue not to speake lewd  
ly? Howe shoulde they be confessed  
to the lord alyue, that leaue sooner to  
lyue than to synne? But thou yonge  
man in thy flowyng age, why pro-  
longest thou the mendyng of thy lyfe,  
daies, monethes, and yeres? If thy  
body were diseased with the dropsye,  
and thou hadst before the redy a cer-  
taine sure remedy for that disease,  
wouldest thou saie, The nexte yere, I  
will heale my sykenesse? I knowe  
well thou wouldest not bec so madde,  
but thou wouldest haste moſte grebly  
to be healed. And in the diseases of  
the soule, muche more peryllous, doest  
thou tarie, and drive forth from daie  
to daie, frome that daie to that, yea  
thou defferrest thy saluacion to the  
daie of thy deathe? And who is thy  
suretee, that thou shalt lyue tyll to-  
morrowe? But these thynges bee not  
spoken



note

## De misericordia

spoken, to the ende that any man shuld  
despeyre of forgeuenesse, but to the en-  
tent we woulde wrest from euery man  
the carelesse continuance in synne.

*Mat. xli.*

¶ There is synne, that neyther in this  
worlde, nor in the worlde to come, is  
forgeuen. God forbed, that any of vs  
shoulde swaue so farre wyde. And  
therfore the moſte ſure thyng is to es-  
chewe synne. The nerte is, that by

*rep. iulian*  
*Pro. xxiii.*

and by we put awaie by penance, that  
we haue sinnefully wrought. A good  
man falleth .vii. tymes on a daie, but  
he ryseth agayne: all thowge this be  
spoken by venyall synnes. And ther-  
fore the lorde ofte tymes thretneth vs  
sharply in holy scripture, lest on trust  
of forgeuenesse, that is so ready, we  
shoulde walowe into the myer of vn-  
gracious deedes. And therfore the  
plaster of penance is not geuen, that  
we shoulde wylfully continue in our  
disease, but least be, whiche perchance  
falleth, shoulde be losse for euer. In

*Amos xxiii*

Amos the lorde oft thondreth against  
three or foure wyckedneses: Shall  
not I abhorre them? It is wycked-  
nesse to thynke ill. ¶ There, by and  
by we shoulde take repentaunce: but  
it is



It is greater wyckednesse, to wyll to 2  
 perfourme that that thou dydst mind:  
 at the leaſte, from that grice the foote  
 ſhoulde ſteppe to better. But the gre-  
 uouſt offence is, fylthily to perfourme 3  
 that that thou dydst wyckedly pur-  
 poſe. And here we be neyther ſorpe  
 nor amende, but we putte to it the  
 fourth wyckednesse, accuſtomyng vs 4  
 in ſynnes, and heappynge ſynnes vppon  
 ſyns. Nowe at this poynt maie not  
 the lorde wel abhorre vs: Yes truly,  
 ne' were it that his mercy paſſed his  
 iuſtice. Behold what foloweth after  
 ſo ſharpe thretninges in the ſame pro-  
 phet: This ſaith the lord to the houſe  
 of Iſrael: Seke, and ye ſhal fynd me,  
 ſeke your lord and come. Let vs here  
 the lorde thretning leſt we ſhulde ſyn: Amos. v.  
 let vs here the lord reclaiming vs, that  
 we deſpeyre not. Orels wo be to vs,  
 if he ſhulde do to vs that he thretne-  
 th by the prophete: and after the thyrde  
 or fourth wyckednesse he ſhoulde  
 tourne awaie from vs his mercy, and  
 leaue vs alone to our will. Yea with  
 many of vs it ſhoulde goe ryght euyl,  
 if the lorde ſhoulde tourne his face a-  
 waie after a thouſande wycked deedes,  
 des,

## De misericordia

Amos. vii.

des: But by and by as his ryghtous-  
nes begynneth to waxe vigorous,  
Mercy steppeth forth and saith: O  
lorde god, be mercyfull: I prae the,  
who shall lyfte vp Jacob, for he is a  
babe: And agayne: O lorde god, I  
prae the cease, who shall reple vp Ja-  
cob, for he is a babe: Thus Mercy,  
our beste defender, pleaderh the cause  
of our traitor. Nowe take heede,  
howe ready forgouenesse is to one re-  
pentynge and amendyng. The lorde  
(saith he) hath had pitie vpon him.  
It shall not be, saith the lorde. Ye  
see, howe soone he, thretynng venges-  
ance, repenteth, if that we truely will  
repente our mysdoedes. It shall not  
be, saith the lorde. I prae you, what  
mother is so lyghtly pleased with his  
childe? Therefore, sythe we haue a  
lorde so easye to please, and an aduo-  
catrice so effectuell, what thyng is  
there, why any man despayring of him  
selfe, shoulde eyther contynue in syn,  
or with Judas flee to hange him self?  
¶ Euen for the same purpose the lord  
by all meanes, myndyng our saluati-  
on, suffered moste excellent and moste  
approued men to fall in greuous syn-  
nes



nes, that by theyr example he might encourage and comforte vs to hope to bee forgiven. What thyng in holys scripture is moze laudable than kyng Dauid? He was a kyng, he was a prophete, he was a man to goddes owne mynde, of his linage Christ was promysed to come. But into howe soule, into howe manyfolde a synne dyd so great a man fall? He heareth of Nathan, the rebuke and cruell threynynges of the lorde. But Dauid with two wordes tourneth all this angre of god into mercye. He saied thus: I haue offended agaynst my lorde: And soorthwith Nathan saied to hym: The lorde also hath transported thy synne, thou shalte not die.

II. Re. xii.

The threynynges bee of a greatte length, to the entent he myght correcte hym, but howe swyfte is the voyce of mercye: Thou shalte not die?

Althowse by Elsie, Ezechias heareth: Thou shalte die, and shalt not live. Ezechias wept and made great lamentacion. The prophete, the messenger of deathe, was not yet gone halfe the kynges court, but that the

III. Re. xii.

Elai.

xxviii.

mercye

## De misericordia

mercy of the lord called him again, saying: Returne backe, and saie to Ezechias, the capitayne of my people thus: This saith the lord, the god of Dauid thy father, I haue heard thy prayers, and haue seen thy weeping, and I haue healed the. The thyrde daie after this thou shalt go in to the temple of the lord.

Cap. xxi.

**T**he thyrde booke of kynges witnesseth the same of Achab. There was not suche an other as Achab, whiche was solde, to the entent he myght do myschiettes in the syght of the lord. And he hereth these wordes: Thou haste kylde, and more ouer thou haste possessed: As whan he hadde slayne Naboth, he occupied his vineyarde: but at the last he was so astrapde with the cruell threynynges of the lord, that he rente his clothes, and ware a shirte of heare, he fasted, and slepte in wollen, and wandred about hangyng downe his heade. Achab was forward, and had oft despyled the lord that rebuked hym, he hadde heaped synnes vpon synnes: and at the laste he was rather fered with dreade of myschiettes, hangyng ouer hym, than he



he mynded to repente and amende :  
 And yet the lord, of his excelling  
 mercy, speaketh thus to Help : Hast  
 thou not seen, how Achab hath hum-  
 bled hym selfe before me ? because he  
 hath humbled hym selfe for my sake,  
 I will brynge in no myschiffe in his  
 daies.

**C** If the myght of false repentance be  
 so great, that it can wreste the reuen-  
 ging sword out of the hande of god,  
 what shall the mynde do, that is true-  
 ly chaunged into a contrary affection,  
 and nowe not for dreade of punish-  
 ment, but for loue of god, dooeth aba-  
 horre that that he miswrought ? For  
 this entent he suffered Peter, whiche  
 he had appoynted chiefe of his chur-  
 che, openly to fall. He wepte onely,  
 and obteyned mercy : Whay Christe  
 deliuered his sheepe to Peter to fede,  
 for whiche he suffered deathe, dyd he  
 caste in his teeth, the offence of thysse  
 forsakynge hym ? No for sooth, for  
 nowe all that offence was so washed  
 awaie with teares, that there remay-  
 ned not one streppe therof in our mercif-  
 full lordes remembrance. Paule the

Mat. xiii.

Act. ix.

## De misericordia

Overthrowen, and was made the teacher of nations. We haue great examples of theim that synned, and eke of theim that repented, we ought not by example of any to be prouoked to synne, leaste we shoulde tempte the lord, but if any man happen to be trapped in synne, he hath examples of repentaunce, lest he shoulde despayre. But they dooe waiewardely, that wyl not folowe hym in repentyng, whiche thei folowed in synning. Howe manye prynces bee there, that smile at theyr aduoutrees, and manslaughteres, for the example of Dauid? All thowge in Dauid were so many excellent vertues, that this offence myght haue bene forgiven in recompence of theim: but wolde to god lyke as they folowe him in offending, they woulde so folowe hym eke in repentyng. He dyd spreade abroad his syn through all nations of the world: and he despised the delectacions of the courte, and for purple weareth a sherte of heare, and as breadde he eateth ashes, and myngleth his drynke with weping: euery night he washeth his bedde with teares, and moyseth his

Psalm, c.



his conuerlede with wepyng. And he was not ashamed to saie and synge this verse of penance to all synners: Haue mercy vpon me O lord, after thy great mercy. And after the multitude of thy mercyes, putte awaie my wyckednesse. He was iudge, and gaue sentence of deathe againste hym selfe. For greatly disdeignynge he saith: The lord liueth, for he is the childe of deathe, that hath dooen this thyng. He coude not more euidently bee condemned: than by his owne woorde. God was iudge, and yet as the persone were changed, he committed the iudgement to hym that was giltye. The iudge was taken with a tripple, and he ouercame, that committed to hym the iudgement: David was happily ouercome, god ouercame mercifully, whan he shewed the synner to hym selfe, that had forgot hym selfe. Before as a conquerour, and drunken with vnhappy prosperitee, he accomplished his pleasure with the woman, that he loued, he delpted in his moste sweete childe: but whan he was conuerted to the lord, than at the laste he sawe where he was, and

Psal. i.

ii. Re. xii.

## De misericordia

What difference was betwene a righteous man and an vnyghtous man.

Lyke as an other prophery teacheth:

**Malac. iii.**

Whan a synner with all his herte acknowledgeth his fylthynesse, and confesseth hym selfe woorthy of punysshment, than the lord is iustified, and ouercometh, whan he is iudged, that is to saie, whan he offereth the iudgement to man, as to be iudged him self. But they that ordeyne theyr owne ryghtousnesse, make God in a maner vniuste and a lyer, whiche wylleth, that his mercy shoulde bee knownen in euery man, and reioyceth to turne our vnyghtousnesse into his Glory: seying where sinne was plentiful, there his free lyberalitee aboundeth.

The olde Adam dydde not so, but whan he was called to confession, he layde the blame on his wyfe. Lyke wyse he beyng called to confession, blamed the serpent. If they coude haue songe the songe of David, God haue mercy on me, they had not been banysht out of Paradyse. Cain, not goyng out of kynde, what saith he, beyng prouoked of the lord to repent: Am I my brothers keeper? If

**Psal. i.**

**Gen. iiii.**

be



he had saied thus: I haue sinned,  
 haue mercy on me: and if he had saied  
 it with all his herte, the mercy of god  
 was redy. There is a carnal sorowe,  
 that engendreth deathe, suche as Ju-  
 das had: but againe, there is a godly  
 sorowe, that bringeth forth the salua-  
 tion and sure ioye. Paule tenderly  
 loued all his, yet he reioyseth, that he  
 had caste the Corinthes into suche a  
 sorowe: he condemned hym, that had  
 to dooe with his fathers wyfe, that  
 out of suche sorowe, as after a bytter  
 plaister, foloweth a continuall ioye.  
 And in the meane while sure hope of  
 saluacion, beyng myngled with re-  
 pentance, tempereth the bytternesse  
 of the sorowe. So Dauid, whan he  
 had simplie confessed his syn, and also  
 the wrath of God, that he had deser-  
 ued, herke howe muche hope he con-  
 ceued of the mercy of god: O sorde **Psall.**  
 (saied he) sprynkle me with ysope, and I  
 shall be clensed, thou shalt washe me, and  
 I shall be made whiter than the snowe.  
 Not of his owne good dedes, but by  
 sprynkelyng of the immaculate lam-  
 bes bloode, he promyseth hym pure-  
 nesse: and whan he acknowledged hym  
 selfe

### De misericordia

*synon*  
Himselfe from his mothers wombe to bee  
with spotted defyled, yet out of this  
maner washyng he hopeth to haue  
fayrenesse of innocency, that shoulde  
passe the snowe in whytenesse. And  
he doeth not onely hope to obteyne in-  
nocency agayne, but also that the so-  
rowe of ~~penitence~~ shoulde tourne into  
spirituall ioye. He saith: Thou  
shalte geue ioye and gladnesse to my  
hearyng, and my humble bones shall  
leape for ioye. Yelde to me the glad-  
nesse of thy saluacion, and confirme  
me with thy principall spirite. O  
wonderfull truste of a synner, and yet  
more largely he promyseth hym selfe.  
Somewhat: And my tounge (saith  
he) shall shewe outwardly with great  
myght thy iustice. O lord, thou shalt  
open my lippes, and my mouth shall  
shewe thy prayse. When he hath  
proued the mercy of the lord so great,  
he dydde eke exhorde other, that they  
shoulde repente and amende. So the  
lord saied to Peter: And thou beyng  
conuerted sometime confyrme thy bre-  
therne. Dauid shulde haue perished,  
if he had committed hym selfe to Ju-  
stice, but he beyng in that parte to  
weake



weake, called vpon mercy, and there-  
fore the mercies of the lord he syngeth  
for euer.

**T**hey that pleade matters amonge  
men, as ofte as theyr cause is in ieo-  
perdie, if they maie, they wyl remoue  
it in to an other court, althoughe thei  
be in doubte, whether they shall finde  
there a more egall iudge or no. And  
truely it maie fortune other whyle,  
that he that appeleth, maie appele to  
his domage. But to vs (moste deare  
brettherne) it is a thyng farre far more  
sure, not to stryue with the iustice of  
god, that is to saie, not to caste vp our  
beles againste the pricke, but by and  
by to call vpon his mercy. And true-  
ly in mennes iudgements, there is no  
thyng more surer, than if we maie by  
some colour, cleane denie the cryme,  
that is laide against vs: And the like  
toxiens teache, that that is the most  
miserable state of a cause: whiche  
thei cleape Deprecacion, whan the de-  
fendaunt saieth, I haue offended, for-  
geue me. Here contrary wyse, there  
is nothyng surer for vs, than wylful-  
ly to aknowelage, what so euer we  
hane mys wrought, and to beseeche the

Alill

Judge

## De misericordia

judge of Mercy. And syth the good-  
nesse of God in all holy Scripture so  
louyngly prouoketh vs this to dooe,  
and sythe the examplis of so many  
noble menne exhorte vs thereto: why  
shoulde any be founde, the whiche des-  
perryng of hym selfe, had leiffer ware  
olde in synnes? In god, that is of  
most symple nature, there is nothing,  
that shoulde stryue with other: and  
yet if we beholde those thynges, that  
chaunce to vs, a stryfe shoulde seeme  
to be betwene goddis Justice and his  
Mercy. Justice calleth for vs to pu-  
nyshement: but mercy (as saint Ja-  
mes saith) leapeth vp against iudge-  
ment, as a conquerour. Who dyd  
euer crie: Jesu haue mercy; but by  
and by he obteyned mercy? The  
Cananee crieth: Good lord haue mer-  
cy, and hit daughter is made whole:  
Euery synner shoulde also crie: Good  
lorde haue mercy, and his soule shall  
be healed. He, the blinde begger cri-  
eth: O sonne of David, haue mercy:  
and after his cloke was caste awate,  
he receyued his syght. Let vs also  
crie: Jesu, the sonne of god, haue  
mercy on vs: let vs crie strongly and  
con-

Isa. li.

Mat. v.

Mar. xv.



constantly, even among the houl-  
 yng multitudes of euill imaginaci-  
 ons, and he, of this worldly beggers,  
 shall make vs inheritous of the hea-  
 uenly kyngedome. Who so euer  
 seketh the commoditees of this lyfe,  
 is blynde, he is a begger, and in a pat-  
 ched cloke he beggeth a halfe penie of  
 the people. They that seke to get  
 a kyngedome, yea though they seeme  
 to go about a great weyghtie matter,  
 they doo nothyng els, but wretched-  
 ly begge a halfe penie of a multitude.  
 They that hount for honours, and di-  
 gnitees, be they neuer so great, they  
 crie to the people, Take pitie, geue  
 an halfe peny. But if any will crie:  
 Jesu lorde haue mercy, he is redie to  
 geue vs him selfe. The lorde tarieth,  
 he calleth the to hym: arte not thou  
 vnhappie, if thou renne not? Why  
 tariest in thyne vnhappie clothes?  
 The aulter of mercy is open, and thou  
 tourneste thy selfe to the boundes of  
 madnesse. The sanctuarie of  
 goddes mercy is opened, and thou fle-  
 est in to the hurlepytte of cursed des-  
 pcyre. Thy sauour rechech forth  
 to the his hande, and thou tournest as

**De misericordia**

**Luc. xlii.**

Maie thy face. Heauen is open vnto the, and thou tennest downe headlyng into helle. The lappe of gods goodnesse is holde open to the, and thou fliest to the vnhappie halter. The thefe on the crosse heareth these woordes:

This daie thou shalt be with me in Paradise, and thou bindest and geuest thy selfe to helle.

**B**ut nowe it is tyme to fulfyll that that I lastly promysed, that is to saie, by what meaues the mercye of god maie be soonest gotte. For of prayes, weeping, fastyng, wearyng of heare, and of almes, that is of a contrite herte, is nowe spoken heare and there throughe out all this sermon.

And veratelly these thynges dooe obteyne mercy at Goddes hande. But well doyng to our neyghbour dooeth wreste it out, if I maie so saie. Suche as euery man woulde haue god be to hym, leat hym shewe hym selfe suche to his neyghbour. The grekes proverbe saith: Faueur getteth faueur.

**Luc. vi.**

But among vs, mercy getteth mercede. Geue, and to you shall be geuen: for geue, and ye shall be forgivenen: And loke what measure ye haue mette to your neyghbour

your



Bone, the same god shall mete to you.

And I call mercy or pitie, not onely whan the need of our neyghbour is eased, but also what so euer good dede is dooen to our brother with a good mynde.

He that teacheth hym that erreth, or he that correcteth the misdoer, and otherwhyle he that with strokes chastiseth a synner, if he do it with a christen affection, he doth the worke of mercye vpon his neyghbour: And he that dooeth comfort the wofull, that dooeth brynge the despayred into good hope, he is mercyfull towarde his neyghbour, and he recompenseth or prouoketh the mercy of god.

And veraiely it is not conuenient, that the mercy of Christen people shoulde be of lyttell pryce and common. A paynym wyll geue almes to a begger, any man wyll helpe his frende in ieoperdie, the gentyls also dooe forgeue some offences. But what our mercy ought to be, the gospel teacheth vs: Be mercifull, that ye maie be the children of your father, that is in heauen. If the mercy of god toward vs be of the common sorte, mercy of the common sorte suffiseth vs toward

Lue. vi.

our

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our neyghbour.

**B**ut if he commaunde his soonne to shyne bothe on good and badde: and suffereth so ryche hantour of this worlde to bee commune bothe to the well disposed and wicked: if we wyll appeere his true children, than muste we be wel doers, not only toward our frendes, kins folke, and to them that haue wel deserued it, but also toward straungers, ye to our foes, and to them that haue euill deserued it.

**I**f god for vs, beyng idol worshyp- pers, and childrene of helle, gaue his onely soonne: semeth it a great thyng to vs, if we agayne dooe good to our enemy, whiche is our brother, in that he is a resonable creature? And if our most righteous lorde for our synnes offered vp hym selfe, in the aultar of the crosse, semeth it a great thyng to vs, if we forgeue our neyghbour the wronge that he dyd to vs? Howe dare a synner crie, Lorde haue mercy vpon me, the whiche denieth mercy to his brother? Shall not he worthe

**Mat. xviii** ly here this of the gospels: O naughty seruant, I haue forgiven the all thy dutie, oughtest not thou to haue pitee on thy felowe beyng



Being seruaunt with the? What good  
tourne soeuer we dooe to our neygh-  
bour, the lorde suffereth it to be ascri-  
bed vnto hym, whan he hath neede of  
no man: And all be it that god hath  
fyrste bestowed it all on vs moſte bea-  
pyngly, what good soeuer is our po-  
wer we haue bestowed or dooen to our  
brettherne, yet as thoughe he were  
bounde for our good deedes towarde  
our neyghbour, he promyseth to yelde  
vs agayne good measure, with muche  
encrease, full and well heaped vp. Is  
it not good measure: whan for herbo-  
ryng a poore man, the lorde receiuethe  
the in to the kyngedome of heauen?

The beste waie to waxe ryche: is  
to waxe poore by suche lyberalitee.

The wyse men of this worlde wyll  
not suffre theyr money to rust in theyr  
chestes, but they leue it with the ban-  
kers, that by vsurie they maie gette  
more to it. They that wyll be ryche  
of heauenly goodes, they muste haue  
ado with that moſte lyberall vsurer.

We call them happie, that be ryche:  
but in the gospels, they that be mercy-  
full, bee called happie, because they  
shall obteyne mercy. He playeth the  
vsurer

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Dan. iiii.

1. Ps. lxxi.

Psal. cxl.

vsurer with the lord (saith the wyse  
Hebrew) that pitieth the poore man,  
and he shall quite hym agayne. And  
the prophete saith: Redeme thy synnes  
with almes deedes: because, as the prince  
of the apostles saith: Charitee couereth  
the multitude of synnes. Ye heare  
the exchaunge: but it is with a great  
laker. Lyke wyse he the mysticall sin-  
ger saith. Happie is that man, that  
pitieth and lendeth. Therefore with  
god he playeth a popnet of vsury, who  
so euer, for the loue of god, doeth his  
neighbour a good tourne. Ye heare  
the exchaunge, ye here the encreasing,  
ye heare the redemyng.

**W**ho so euer hurteth his neigh-  
bour, is in danger of him, that he har-  
med: Who so euer to his power, hel-  
peth his neighbour, byndeth him, that  
he dooeth the good tourne to. Dooe  
not aske vengeance on him that offen-  
ded the, and make exchaunge with  
god: forgeue thy neighbour a fewe  
and lyght offences, and god of veray  
couenaunt, wyl forgeue the all thine.  
Acquite no rewarde agayne of thy  
neighbour, to whome thou dydst a  
good tourne, but aske it of god, what  
so



So euer thou disposest well: and he for goodes transitorie, wyll rewarde the with gooddes euerlastyng.

**T**here be dyuers sortes of sacrifices, with whiche god is pleased, as spirituall hymnes, songes, prayers, watchynges, fastynges, homely rayment: but no maner sacrifice is more effectuell, than mercy towarde our brother. Boe (saith the lorde) and learne what it is: I wyll haue mercy and not sacrifice. He damneth not sacrifices, but he preferreth mercy aboue them all. The same that the lorde Iesus wyslysaith to teache vs with his owne mouthe in the gospel, he taught longe before by the mouthe of Michae the prophet. For whan the lorde had rebuked the inuincible obstaculenesse of the people rooted in euyls: the people beyng thoughtfull, by what waie or meane they myght appease god, beyng ryghtously prouoked with so many cursed deedes, saith thus: What thyng worthily maie I offre to god? Shall I boote my knees to almyghtie god? What shulde I offree to hym, sacrifices, and yeryng calves? Wyll he be pleased with

Dee. vi.

Mich. vi.

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With a thousande weathers, or many thousandes of fatte goates? Shall I geue my fyrst begotten sonne for myne offence: the fruite of my wombe, for the synne of my soule? Hetheris speaketh the people, vnderstandyng, that no sacrifice coude of man be offered vp, that myght purge awaye synnes, yea if aboue manye thousande weathers, he wolde offre vp his fyrste begotten sonne, to hym moste deare: but the prophete sheweth a more effectuall sacrifice, wherewith by and by the anger of god is appeased. O man, I will shewe the, what is good, and what the lorde woulde haue of the. Thou muste dooe iudgemene, and loue mercye, and thoughtfully walke with thy lorde god. What is to dooe iudgement? to hurte no man. What is to loue mercy? to dooe them good, that deserue it not.

**1. Cor. xiii.**

Paule the apostell more ouer addeth somewhat to the prayse of mercy. If I shoulde (saith he) geue my body to be bourned, and haue no charitee, it auayleth me nothynge.

**Gen. xxi.**

Abraham profered a great thyng, that was ready to offre vp his onely sonne



Soonne in sacrifice, that he loued specially: but he profereth more, whiche for the loue of god, deliuereth his own body to be bourned. And yet charitee is more acceptable than that sacrifice. And what thyng els is charitee towarde our neyghbour, but mercy? Therefore sythe we continually, in all thynges haue neede of the mercede of god, our special study ought still to be, howe one of vs maie mercifully helpe an other, and so one with an other bearyng our bouthens together, may fulfyll the lawe of Christ, that rather requirerh mercy than sacrifice, and willethe vs to redeeme his mercy, with mercy shewed on our neyghbour. But as my mynde excedyngly reioyceth, whan I cast with my selfe, how great the mercy of the lord is towarde vs, and how redy for vs he wolde it shuld be: so an huge great sorowe petteth myne herte, as ofte as I beholde inwardely, howe rare the myndyng of mercy is amonge Christians. If we were truly merciful, our liberalitee woulde reche euen to the Turkes. We shoulde caste coles of fyre vppon theyr heades, that they beyng our come

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With our goodnes, at last shulde come  
to the felowshyp of our religion. But  
nowe we Christians, by warres, rob-  
beries, theftes, and oppressions, dooe  
more cruelly greue and bere Christi-  
ans, than any kynde of wyld beasts,  
greueth the eunemy therof.

**C**As ye loke to the gayn or winnyng,  
what thyng do we but one lyue by de-  
uourynge an other, after the maner of  
fysches? Who is not ready yea for a  
small auayle, to beguile his brother,  
whose neede he oughte to succour?

Nowe a daies by our brothers pouer-  
tee, we go about to get our auantage:  
our brother for faute of meate dyeth,  
and the more ieoperdy I see hym in,  
the detyr I sell hym that he nederh.

Howe vnlowly is our statelly fiercenes  
toward our inferiours? how great is  
the rebellion of the inferiours toward  
the superiours, yea and in what place  
shall ye fynde pure charitee? All plas-  
ces be full of bzaulinges, detractions,  
backbitinges. And we not only quite  
a littell wronge with a great, but also  
wilfully harme them, that dyd vs no  
hurt. And the meane whyle we minde  
not, howe great mercy the lorde hath  
poured



poured on vs: whiche he will call again from vs: excepte we poure again on our neyghbour, it that we receiued. If ye seke (saith the prophet) seke. If we seke the mercy of god, we must seke it truely, and with all our hert. Turne you and come. She turneth hir to vs, if we wyll tourne to hir. The mercy of god came to vs, whan the son of god descended into þe earth: let vs go to hir again. The most mercifull lorde inclineth hym, that he maie asfoyle the aduoutter, let vs again lifte vp our affection to hym, bootwping downe to vs. The fyrst grace is, to caste awaie syn. So phisicians fyrste pouрге the body, that after they maie put into it better iuices. So thou sinner, fyrst cast out of thy minde all yl affections, that strue against god, lechery, couetousnes, ryot, pride, and angre. whan he that continueth in synne desireth the mercy of god, dothe he not as though an enemy armed, holdyng his sworde & boucke: let in his hand, wold desyre peace? he that asketh, receiueth: he that seeketh, fyndeth, to hym that knocketh, the doore is opened: If ye aske merce, aske it truely: if ye seke, seke aryght:

Elai. xxi.

Jo. viii.

Mat. vii.

**De misericordia**

and if ye knocke at the doore of mercy,  
knocke truly.

**Luce. xv.**

**I** will ye haue an example of one that  
truly asked mercy: He the prodigall  
childe asketh it aright, but that was  
whan he had lefte the hogges, & was  
returned to his father. O father, I haue  
offended in heauen and afoze the, make me as  
one of thy labourers. Now here the pu-  
blican, that for the conscience of his  
sins, dare not lyfte vp his eyes to hea-  
uenwarde, nor dare not come nere the  
altar, but standyng a far of, knocketh  
on his breste, and saierh: **Lorde, haue**  
**mercy on me, a synner.** he despyeth, whose  
affections be turned contrary, that is  
to saie. of a dronkerd is become sobre:  
of a rebaude, chaste: of a glutton tem-  
perate: of a bribour beneficiall: of a  
lewde speaker a good saier: of a dissem-  
bler, a plain man, of a crabbishe fellow  
a lowly man, of a cruell fellowe a mer-  
ciful. He knocketh, that with deuout  
importunitie, in maner compelleth the  
mercy of god, neuer ceassyng to exer-  
cise works of mercy on his neighbour.  
**Crie to the lorde: Haue mercy: but and**  
**thou wilt be hearde, se that thou bere**  
**him again. He crieth in his membles,**  
**that**

**Luce. xvi.**



**Domini Conclo.**

that is to saie, the sicke & neddy  
if thou stop thine eies, he wil not  
the again, calling to him. He is re-  
shed in his poore, in them he thyrsteth,  
in them he hangreth, in the he is sicke,  
and pyneth, in them he is dispised and  
offended. but more vnshamefastly saith  
he to the lord: Haue mercy vpon me, whi-  
che only will not refreſhe his brother,  
but also vereth hym gyttleſſe, and op-  
preſſeth the weake, betrayeth the inno-  
cent, ſpoileth the poore, begileth the  
harmeles. In continuing in thoſe dees  
des, he calleth on the mercy of the lord  
in vaine. If thei that do not refreſhe  
Chriſt in his membres, ſhall here: So  
ye curſed into everlaſtyng ſyre: what ſhall  
thei here, that reuile, ſpitte at, mocke,  
beate, puniſhe, ſklaunder, ſle Chriſte in  
his membres? If I bee not diſceiued,  
there is a ſentence amonge the mimes  
puplians, whiche beſemeth a chriſten  
man: In geuing he receiued a benefit,  
that gaue it vnto hym, that was wor-  
thy to haue it. Why ſtickeſt at it, thou  
ſroward ponderer of an others digni-  
tee? He geueth to one worthy to haue  
it, that geueth to the mēbre of Chriſte:  
he geueth to one woorthy therof, that

**Mat. xv.**

**It li**

**geueth**

## De misericordia

to his brother. And finally, he  
geth to one woorthy of it, who so e-  
uer, for Jesus loue, geueth to a poore  
creature. If thou seke wynnynge, play  
the blurer with him: if þe drede peyne,  
thou hast wherby þe maiest redeme it.  
After a sharpe rebuke, what saith the  
lord in the gospel? Yet geue almes (saith  
he) and see, all thynges be cleane vnto you.  
**¶** When a tempest of the sea is redy to  
drenche the, thou styckest not to caste  
thy marchandise into the sea (be it ne-  
uer so precious) to saue thy owne life:  
when the vengeaunce of god hangerh  
ouer the, dothe it greue the to dispose  
a lyttell money on thy neyghbour?  
**¶** What woldeste thou leaue vndone,  
if thy hous wer a fyre? But what bur-  
ning is so dredful as the anger of god?  
when his anger sodainly flameth vp,  
wilt not vse the remedy, that is shew-  
ed to quēche it? What, wilt thou aske,  
who sheweth it? That dothe the very  
good man Sirache: water (saith he)  
quencheth flaming fyre, and almes drede  
withstandeth syns. Almes dede knoweth  
no boastyng: for so he loseth his name.  
Thei that geue almes with a trumpe  
blowing before them, thei geue not al-  
mes

Luc. xi.

Ecc. iii.



mes, but thei be glory. For that is be **Mat. vi.**  
 rate almes before god, whan thy lyfte  
 hande knoweth not what thy right  
 hande doth. But (saith he) thy treasure  
 in the commaundementes of god, and it shall **Ecc. xxi.**  
 profite the moze than golde: But thy almes  
 in the poore mans herte, and it shall delpue  
 the from all euill. Thy treasure is neuer  
 so sure buried or hidde, as in the poore  
 mans hert. It is far better locked there  
 than in thy yron chestes. Forget that  
 thou hast geuen: let not the poore man  
 knowe (if it maie be) who dyd to him  
 the good dede. Whan thy nede requi-  
 reth an intercessour, thy almes dede  
 shall not be dumme, but shall obteyne  
 of the lord, that thou, that didst suc-  
 cour thy neighbour in trouble, shalt be  
 deliuered from all euill. will ye here  
 almes dede speake? Come ye blessed chil- **Mat. xvi.**  
 dren of my father, for whan I was hungry,  
 ye gaue me meate: Whan I was thurstie, ye  
 gaue me drinke: whan I was naked, ye clo-  
 thed me: whan I wanted lodging ye lodged  
 me: whan I was sycke, ye viseted me: whan  
 I was in prison, ye came to me. Thei not  
 remembryng thei benefites, will an-  
 swere and saie: O lord, whan did we see  
 the wanting those thynges, & did succour the?

## De misericordia

The other part reherseb thei: her-  
tues; and thei here these wordes: Go  
ye into everlastyng fyre. Shall not almes  
decde than, bee a good spoken woman,  
that shall deliuer vs from hel, that is  
to saie, from all mischiefe, and laygne  
vs to the lord, the very fountaine of al  
goodnesse. What retheth now (deare  
bretherne) but that we muste beseeche  
the mercy of the lord, that he wil vouch-  
thesafe to graunt vs, that we maie be  
mercifull to our neyghbour, lest we in  
this behalfe, litel regardyng his mer-  
cy, shall afterward requite it in vaine:  
but the more we be prouoked by mercy  
here, the more sharper we shal find his  
iudgement. Lett mercy towarde our  
bretherne, ouercome in vs all worldly  
affections, that in god, mercy toward  
vs maie ouercome iudgement. And so  
thā shall we with agreable minde to  
gether, syng the mercyes of the lorde  
for euer, aknowlagyng his mercies, a  
boue all his workes. To whō be praise  
and glozpe throughe all coses of the  
earth for euer more. Amen.

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